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COBBETT'S EASY GRAMMAR

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS

BY

WILLIAM COBBETT

WITH PREFACE BY
THE RT. HON. J. R. CLYNES, M.P.

REVISED AND BROUGHT UP TO DATE

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PREFACE

BOOKS can render no better service than the service of helping to make men, and the volume which passes this test should have an enduring place in the mind of the reader, rather than on the shelf of his book-case. I write now of only one of the books which in my younger days did exert upon me an influence which has endured.

To leave school in part at ten, and altogether at twelve years of age, and work hard for long hours during the early days of boyhood and youth is an absolute guarantee of losing altogether anything learned during the few earlier years of elementary school training.

How I came by a copy of Cobbett's English Grammar, I do not know. To a youth with only the vaguest idea of the meaning of the word "grammar," illuminating plainness was essential. Cobbett taught grammar to his son in addressing to him a number of long letters. This is how he begins :—

"Grammar teaches us how to make use of words; that is to say, it teaches us how to make use of them in a proper manner, as I used to teach you how to sow and plant the beds in the garden; for you could have thrown about seeds and stuck in plants of some sort or other, in some way or other, without any

teaching of mine; and so can anybody, without rules or instructions, put masses of words upon paper; but to be able to choose the words which ought to be employed, and to place them where they ought to be placed, we must become acquainted with certain principles and rules."

After that most of the laws of spelling, pronunciation, and speech became simple. Study was not a task. It became a joy. Anyone who studies Cobbett's Grammar must derive a twofold benefit. The benefit is not only in the knowledge of how more correctly and clearly to write and speak. Benefit comes also in the joy which every student will feel at the stimulating methods of the teacher.

Among several manifestations of poverty, poverty of self-expression is something which cannot be passed as unimportant. Any book which helps greatly to improve the use of our language is worth attention. A diligent study of this book will enrich the store of the reader, without making anyone the poorer.

J. R. CLYNES.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

My Dear James,

You have now arrived at the age of fourteen years without ever having been bidden, or even advised, to look into a book; and all you know of reading or of writing you owe to your own unbiased taste and choice. But while you have lived unpersecuted by such importunities, you have had the very great advantage of being brought up under a roof, beneath which no cards, no dice, no gaming, no senseless pastime of any description, ever found a place. In the absence of these, books naturally became your companions during some part of your time: you have read and written because you saw your elders read and write, just as you have learned to dig the beds in the garden, to trim the flowers, and to prune the trees. The healthful exercise, and the pleasures, unmixed with fear, which you have derived from these sources, have given you "a sound mind in a sound body," and this, says an English writer, whose works you will by-and-by read, "is the greatest blessing that God can give to man."

It is true that these are very great blessings; but mere soundness of mind, without any mental acquirements, is possessed by millions: it is an ordinary possession; and it gives

a man no fair pretensions to merit, because he owes it to accident, and not to anything done by himself. But knowledge, in any art or science, being always the fruit of observation, study, or practice, gives, in proportion to its extent and usefulness, the possessor a just claim to respect. To entitle a man to respect, then, there must be something of his own doing, beyond the bounds of his well-known duties and obligations.

Therefore, being extremely desirous to see you, my dear James, an object of respect, I now call upon you to apply your mind to the acquiring of that kind of knowledge which is inseparable from an acquaintance with books: for, though knowledge, in every art and science, is, if properly applied, worthy of praise in proportion to its extent and usefulness, there are some kinds of knowledge which are justly considered as of a superior order, not only because the possession of them is a proof of more than ordinary industry and talent, but because the application of them has naturally a more powerful influence in the affairs and on the condition of our friends, acquaintances, neighbours, and country.

The particular path of knowledge, to be pursued by you, will be of your own choosing; but, as to knowledge connected with books, there is a step to be taken before you can fairly enter upon any path. In the immense field of this kind of knowledge, innumerable are the paths, and GRAMMAR is the gate of entrance to them all. And, if grammar be so useful in

the attaining of knowledge, it is absolutely necessary in order to enable the possessor to communicate, by writing, that knowledge to others, without which communication, the possession must be comparatively useless to himself in many cases, and, in almost all cases, to the rest of mankind.

The actions of men proceed from their *thoughts*. In order to obtain the co-operation, the concurrence, or the consent of others, we must communicate our thoughts to them. The means of this communication are words; and grammar teaches us *how to make use of words*. Therefore, in all ranks, degrees, and situations of life, a knowledge of the principles and rules of grammar must be useful; in some situations it must be necessary to the avoiding of really injurious errors; and in no situation, which calls on a man to place his thoughts upon paper, can the possession of it fail to be a source of self-gratulation, or the want of it a cause of mortification and sorrow.

Though I have now said what, I am sure, will be more than sufficient to make you entertain a strong desire to take this first step in the road to literary knowledge, I cannot conclude this introductory letter, without observing, that you ought to proceed in your study, not only with diligence, but with *patience*.

I have put my work into the form of letters, in order that I might be continually reminded that I was addressing myself to persons, who needed to be spoken to with great clearness. I have *numbered* the letters themselves, and

also the *paragraphs*, in order that I might be able, in some parts of the work, to *refer* you to, or *tell you where to look at* other parts of the work. And here I will just add, that a *sentence*, used as a term in grammar, means one of those portions of words, which are divided from the rest by a *single dot*, which is called a *period*, or *full stop*; and that a *paragraph* means one of those collections, or blocks, of *sentences*, which are divided from the rest of the work by beginning a *new line* a little *further* in than the lines in general; and, of course, all this part, which I have just now written, beginning with "*I have put my work into the form*," is a *paragraph*.

In a confident reliance on your attentiveness, industry, and patience, I have a great hope of seeing you become a man of real learning; and, in that hope, I am your happy as well as affectionate father.

WILLIAM COBBETT.

LETTER II.

DEFINITION OF GRAMMAR AND OF ITS DIFFERENT BRANCHES OR PARTS.

MY DEAR JAMES,

1. In the foregoing letter I have laid before you some of the inducements to the study of Grammar. In this I will define, or describe, the thing called *Grammar*, and also its different *Branches* or *Parts*.

2. Grammar, as I observed to you before, teaches us *how to make use of words*: that is to say, it teaches us how to make use of them

in a proper manner, as I used to teach you how to sow and plant the beds in the garden; for you could have thrown about seeds and stuck in plants of some sort or other, in some way or other, without any teaching of mine; and so can anybody, without rules or instructions, put masses of words upon paper; but to be able to choose the words which ought to be employed, and to place them where they ought to be placed, we must become acquainted with certain principles and rules; and these principles and rules constitute what is called Grammar.

3. Nor must you suppose, by-and-by, when you come to read about *Nouns* and *Verbs* and *Pronouns*, that all this tends to nothing but mere ornamental learning, that it is not altogether necessary, and that people may write to be understood very well without it. This is not the case; for without a pretty perfect knowledge relative to these same Nouns and Verbs, those who write are never sure that they put upon paper what they mean to put upon paper. I will, before the close of these letters, show you, that even very learned men have frequently written and caused to be published, not only what they did not mean, but the very contrary of what they meant; and if errors, such as are here spoken of, are sometimes committed by learned men, into what endless errors must those fall, who have no knowledge of any principles or rules, by the observance of which the like may be avoided? Grammar, perfectly understood, enables us, not only to express our

meaning fully and clearly, but so to express it as to enable us to defy the ingenuity of man to give to our words any other meaning than that which we ourselves intend them to express. This, therefore, is a science of substantial utility.

4. As to the different *Branches* or *Parts* of Grammar, they are usually divided into *four*, and they are thus named: *Orthography*, *Prosody*, *Etymology*, and *Syntax*.

5. There are two of these branches on which we have very little to say, and the names of which have been kept in use from an unwillingness to give up the practice of former times; but, as it is usual to give them a place in books of this kind, I will explain to you the nature of all the four branches.

6. ORTHOGRAPHY is a word made up of two Greek words, which mean *word-making*, or *spelling*. The use of foreign words, in this manner, was introduced at the time when the English language was in a very barbarous state; and, though this use has been continued, it ought to be a rule with you, always, when you either write or speak, to avoid the use of any foreign or uncommon word, if you can express your meaning as fully and clearly by an English word in common use. However, *Orthography* means neither more nor less than the very humble business of putting *Letters* together properly, so that they shall form *Words*. This is so very childish a concern, that I will not appear to suppose it necessary for me to dwell upon it; but, as you will, by-and-by, meet with some directions, under the head of

Etymology, in which directions *Vowels* and *Consonants* will be spoken of, I will here, for form's sake, just observe, that the letters A, E, I, O, and U are *Vowels*. Y, in certain cases, is also a *Vowel*. All the rest of the letters of the alphabet are *Consonants*.

7. PROSODY is a word taken from the Greek language, and it means neither more nor less than what is expressed by the more common word PRONUNCIATION; that is to say, the business of using the proper *sound* and employing the due *length of time*, in the uttering of syllables and words. This is a matter, however, which ought not to occupy much of your attention; because *pronunciation* is learnt as birds learn to chirp and sing.

8. ETYMOLOGY is a very different matter; and, under this head, you will enter on your study. This is a word, which has been formed out of two Greek words; and it means, the *pedigree*, or *relationship of words*, or, the manner in which one word grows out of, or comes from, another word. For instance, the word *walk* expresses an action, or movement of our legs; but, in some cases we say *walks*, in others *walked*, in others *walking*. These three latter words are all different from each other, and they all differ from the original word, *walk*; but the action or movement, expressed by each of the four, is precisely the same sort of action or movement, and the three latter words grow out of, or come from, the first. The words here mentioned differ from each other with regard to the letters of which they are com-

posed. This difference is made in order to express differences as to the *persons* who walk, as to the *number* of persons, as to the *time* of walking. You will come, by-and-by, to the principles and rules, according to which the varying of the spelling of words is made to correspond with these and other differences; and these principles and rules constitute what is called *Etymology*.

9. SYNTAX is a word, which comes from the Greek. It means, in that language, the *joining of several things together*; and, as used by grammarians, it means those principles and rules, which teach us how to put words together so as to form *sentences*. It means, in short, *sentence-making*. Having been taught by the rules of Etymology, what are the relationships of words, how words grow out of each other, how they are varied in their letters in order to correspond with the variations in the circumstances to which they apply, Syntax will teach you how to give to all your words their *proper* situations, or places, when you come to put them together into sentences. And here you will have to do with points as well as with words. The points are four in number —the *Comma*, the *Semi-Colon*, the *Colon*, and the *Full-Stop*. Besides these *points*, there are certain *marks*, such as the mark of *Interrogation*, for instance; and, to use these points and marks properly is, as you will by-and-by find, a matter of very great importance.

10. I have now given you a description of Grammar and of its separate branches, or parts.

I have shown you, that the two first of these branches may be dismissed without any further notice; but, very different indeed is the case with regard to the two latter. Each of these will require several letters; and those letters will contain matter, which it will be impossible to understand without the greatest attention. You must read soberly and slowly, and you must think as you read. You must not hurry on from one letter to another, as if you were reading a history; but you must have patience to get, if possible, at a clear comprehension of one part of the subject before you proceed to another part. When I was studying the French language, the manner in which I proceeded, was this: when I had attentively read over, three times, a lesson, or other division of my Grammar, I wrote the lesson down upon a loose sheet of paper. I then read it again several times in my own handwriting. Then I copied it, in a very plain hand, and without a blot, into a book, which I had made for the purpose. But, if, in writing my lesson down on a loose sheet of paper, I committed one single error, however trifling, I used to tear up the paper, and write the whole down again; and, frequently, this occurred three or four times in the writing down of one lesson. I, at first, found this labour very irksome; but, having imposed it on myself as a duty, I faithfully discharged that duty; and long before I had proceeded half the way through my Grammar, I experienced all the benefits of my industry and perseverance.

LETTER III.

ETYMOLOGY.

The different Parts of Speech, or, Kinds of Words.

MY DEAR JAMES,

11. In the second letter I gave you a description of Etymology, and showed you that it treats of the *pedigree*, or *relationship* of words, of the nature of which relationship I have given you a specimen in the word *walk*. The next thing is to teach you the principles and rules, according to which the spelling and employing of words are varied, in order to express the various circumstances attending this relationship. But, before I enter on this part of my instructions, I must inform you that there are several distinct sorts of words, or, as they are usually called, *Parts of Speech*; and, it will be necessary for you to be able, before you proceed further, to distinguish the words, belonging to each of these Parts of Speech, from those, belonging to the other parts. There are nine Parts of Speech, and they are named thus: ARTICLES, NOUNS, PRONOUNS, ADJECTIVES, VERBS, ADVERBS, PREPOSITIONS, CONJUNCTIONS, INTERJECTIONS.

12. ARTICLES. There are but *three* in our language; and these are, *the*, *an*, and *a*. Indeed, there are but two, because *an* and *a* are the same word, the latter being only an abbreviation, or a shortening, of the former. I shall by-and-by, give you rules for the using of these

Articles; but, my business in this place is only to teach you how to know one sort of word from another sort of word.

13. NOUNS. The word Noun means *name*, and nothing more; and Nouns are the names of persons and things. As far as persons and other animals and things that we can see go, it is very easy to distinguish Nouns; but, there are many Nouns, which express what we can neither see, nor hear, nor touch. For example: *conscience*, *vanity*, *vice*, *sobriety*, *steadiness*, *valour*; and a great number of others. Grammarians, anxious to give some easy rule, by which the scholar might distinguish Nouns from other words, have directed him to put the words "the good" before any word; and have told him, that, if the three words make sense, the last word is a Noun. This is frequently the case; as, the good *house*, the good *dog*; but the good *sobriety* would not appear to be very good sense. In fact, there is no rule of this kind that will answer the purpose. You must employ your mind in order to arrive at the knowledge here desired.

14. Every word which stands for a person or any animal, or for any thing of substance, dead or alive, is a Noun. So far the matter is very easy. Thus, *man*, *cat*, *tree*, *log*, are Nouns. But, when we come to the words which are the names of things, and which things are *not substances*, the matter is not so easy; and it requires a little sober thought. This word *thought*, for example, is a Noun.

15. The only sure rule is this: that a word,

which stands for any thing that has *an existence*, is a Noun. For example : *pride, folly, thought, misery, truth, falsehood, opinion, sentiment.* None of these have any *substance.* You cannot see them, nor touch them ; but they all have an *existence.* They all *exist* in the world ; and, therefore, the words which represent them, or stand for them, are called Nouns. If you be still a little puzzled here, you must not be impatient. You will find the difficulty disappear in a short time, if you exert your powers of thinking. Ask yourself what existence means. You will find that the words, *very, for, think, but, pretty,* do not express anything which has an existence, or a being ; but, that the words, *motive, zeal, pity, kindness,* do express things which have a being or existence.

16. PRONOUNS. Words of this sort *stand in the place of Nouns.* Their name is from the Latin, and it means *For-nouns,* or *For-names* ; that is to say, these words, called Pronouns, are used for, or instead of, Nouns. *He, She, Her, Him, Who,* for example, are Pronouns. The use of them is to prevent the repetition of Nouns, and to make speaking and writing more rapid and less encumbered with words. An example will make this clear to you in a minute. Thus :

17. A woman went to a man, and told *him,* that *he* was in great danger of being murdered by a gang of robbers, *who* had made preparations for attacking *him. He* thanked *her* for *her* kindness, and, as *he* was unable to defend *himself, he* left *his* house and went to a neighbour's.

18. Now, if there were no Pronouns, this sentence must be written as follows: A woman went to a man, and told the man, that the man was in great danger of being murdered by a gang of robbers; as a gang of robbers had made preparations for attacking the man. The man thanked the woman for the woman's kindness; and, as the man was unable to defend the man's self, the man left the man's house, and went to a neighbour's.

19. ADJECTIVES. The word Adjective, in its full literal sense, means *something added to something else*. Therefore, this term is used in Grammar as the name of that Part of Speech, which consists of words which are added or put to Nouns, in order to express something relating to the Nouns, which something could not be expressed without the help of Adjectives. For instance, there are several turkeys in the yard, some black, some white, and some speckled; and, then, there are large ones and small ones of all the colours. I want you to go and catch a *turkey*; but I also want you to catch a *white* turkey, and not only a white turkey, but a *large* turkey. Therefore I add, or put, to the Noun, the words *white* and *large*, which, accordingly, are called Adjectives.

20. VERBS. Grammarians appear to have been at a loss to discover a suitable appellation for this important kind of words, or Part of Speech; for, the word *verb* means nothing more than *word*. In the Latin it is *verbum*, in the French it is *verbe*; and the French, in their Bible, say *Le Verbe*, where we say

The Word. The truth is, that there are so many properties and circumstances, so many and such different powers and functions belonging to this Part of Speech, that the mind of man is unable to bring the whole of them into any short and precise description. The first Grammar that I ever looked into told me that "a Verb is a word which signifies, *to do*, *to be*, or *to suffer*." What was I to understand from this laconic account?

21. Verbs express all the different actions and movements of all creatures and of all things, whether alive or dead; as, for instance, *to speak*, *to bark*, *to grow*, *to moulder*, *to crack*, *to crumble*, and the like. In all these cases there is movement clearly understood. But, in the cases of, *to think*, *to reflect*, *to remember*, *to like*, *to detest*, and in an infinite number of cases, the movement is not so easily perceived. Yet these are all Verbs, and they do indeed express movements which we attribute to the mind or the heart. But what shall we say in the cases of, *to sit*, *to sleep*, *to rot*, and the like? Still, these are all Verbs.

22. Verbs are, then, a sort of words, the use of which is to express the *actions*, the *movements*, and the *state or manner of being*, of all creatures and things, whether animate or inanimate. In speaking with reference to a man, *to fight* is an action; *to reflect* is a movement; *to sit* is a state of being.

23. ADVERBS are so called because the words which belong to this Part of Speech are *added* to Verbs. But this is an inadequate descrip-

tion; for, as you will presently see, they are sometimes otherwise employed. You have seen that Verbs express actions, movements, and states of being: and it is very frequently the use of Adverbs to express the manner of actions, movements, and states of being. Thus; the man fights *bravely*, he reflects *profoundly*, he sits *quietly*. In these instances the Adverbs perform an office, and are placed in a situation which fully justifies the name that has been given to this sort of words. But there are many Adverbs which do not express the manner of actions, movements, or states of being, and which are not added to Verbs. For instance: "*When* you sow small seeds, make the earth *very* fine, and if it has, *of late*, been dry weather, take care to press the earth *extremely* hard upon the seeds." Here are four Adverbs, but only the last of the four expresses anything connected with a Verb. This shows that the name of this class of words does not fully convey to our minds a description of their use.

24. However, with this name you must be content; but, you must bear in mind, that there are Adverbs of *time*, of *place*, and of *degree*, as well as of *manner*; and that their business is to express, or describe, some circumstances in addition to all that is expressed by the Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs. In the above sentences, for example, the words *when*, *very*, *of late*, and *extremely*, add greatly to the precept, which, without them, would lose much of its force.

25. PREPOSITIONS. The Prepositions are: *in*, *to*, *for*, *from*, *of*, *by*, *with*, *into*, *against*, *at*, and

several others. They are called *Prepositions* from two Latin words, meaning *before* and *place*: and this name is given them because they are in most cases *placed before* Nouns and Pronouns: as, "Indian corn is sown *in* May. *In* June and the three following months, it is carefully cultivated. When ripe, *in* October, it is gathered *in* the field, *by* men who go *from* hill *to* hill *with* carts, *into* which they put the ears. The leaves and stalks are then collected *for* winter use; and, they not only serve as food *for* cattle and sheep, but are excellent *in* the making of sheds to protect animals against the inclemency *of* the weather."

26. CONJUNCTIONS are so called, because they *conjoin* or *join together*, words, or parts of sentences, as: "Peas *and* beans may be severed from the ground before they be quite dry; *but* they must not be put into stacks or barns until perfectly dry; *for*, if they be, they will mould." The word *and* joins together the words *peas* and *beans* and, by the means of this junction, makes all the remaining part of the sentence apply to both. The word *but* connects the first with the second member of the sentence. The word *for*, which is sometimes a Conjunction, performs in this case, the same office as the word *but*: it continues the connection and thus does every part of the sentence apply to each of the two nouns which are the subject of it.

27. INTERJECTIONS. This name comes from two Latin words: *inter*, which means *between*, and *jection*, which means *something thrown*.

So that the full literal meaning of the word is something thrown between. The Interjections are *Ah! Oh! Alas!* and such like, which indeed, are not words, because they have no definite meaning. They are mere *sounds*, and they have been mentioned by me, merely because other grammarians have considered them as being a Part of Speech. But this one notice of them will be quite sufficient.

28. Thus, then, you are now able to distinguish, in many cases, at least, to what Part of Speech belongs each of the several words which may come under your observation. I shall now proceed to the Etymology of each of these Parts of Speech. As we have done with the Interjections, there will remain only *eight* parts to treat of, and this I shall do in *eight* letters, allotting one letter to each Part of Speech.

LETTER IV.

ETYMOLOGY OF ARTICLES.

MY DEAR JAMES,

29. In Letter III, paragraph 12, you have seen what sort of words ARTICLES are; that is to say, you have there learnt how to distinguish the words belonging to this Part of Speech from words belonging to other Parts of Speech. You must now turn to Letter II, paragraph 8. Having read what you find there under the head of Etymology, you will see at once, that my business, in this present letter, is to teach you those principles and rules, according to which, articles are varied in order to make

them suit the different circumstances which they are used to express.

30. You have seen, that there are but three articles, namely, *a* or *an*, and *the*. The two former are, in fact, the same word, but, of this, I shall say more presently. They are called indefinite articles, because they do *not define*, or *determine*, what particular object is under consideration. The Nouns, to which they are prefixed, only serve to point out the sort of person or thing spoken of, without defining *what* person or *what* thing; as, *a tree is blown down*. From this we learn that some tree is blown down, but not what tree. But, the definite article, *the*, determines the particular object of which we speak; as, *the tree, which stood close beside the barn, is blown down*. In this last instance, we are not only informed that a tree is blown down, but the sentence also informs us what particular tree it is. This article is used before nouns in the plural as well as before nouns in the singular number. It is sometimes used before words expressive of degrees of comparison; as, *the best, the worst, the highest, the lowest*. When we use a noun in the singular number to express a whole species, or sort, we use the definite article; thus, we say, *the oak is a fine tree*, when we mean that oaks are fine trees.

31. The article *a* becomes *an* when this article comes immediately before any word which begins with a *vowel*. This is for the sake of the sound, as, *an adder, an elephant, an inch, an oily seed, an ugly hat*. The word *an* is also

used before words which begin with an *h* which is mute, that is to say, which, though used in writing, is not sounded in speaking; as *an hour*. This little variation in the article is, as I said before, for the sake of the sound; for it would be very disagreeable to say, *a adder, a elephant, a inch, a oily seed, a ugly hat, a hour*, and the like. But, *a* is used, in the usual way, before words which begin with an *h* which is sounded in speaking; as, *a horse, a hair*, and so on. The indefinite article can be used before nouns in the singular number only. There is a seeming exception to this rule in cases where the words few and many come before the noun; as, *a few* horses, *a great many* horses; but, in reality, this is not an exception, because the words *few* and *many* mean *number*, thus: a *small number* of horses; a *great number* of horses; and the indefinite article agrees with this word number, which is understood, and which is in the *singular*.

LETTER V.

ETYMOLOGY OF NOUNS.

32. This, my dear James, is a letter of great importance, and, therefore, it will require great attention from you. Before you proceed further, you will again look well at Letter II, paragraph 8, and then at Letter III, paragraphs 13, 14, and 15, and there read carefully everything under the head of Nouns.

33. Now, then, as Letter III has taught you how to distinguish nouns from the words which

belong to the other Parts of Speech, the business here is to teach you the principles and rules, according to which nouns are to be varied in the letters of which they are composed, according to which they are to be used, and according to which they are to be considered in their bearings upon other words in the sentences in which they are used.

34. In a noun there are to be considered the branches, the numbers, the genders, and the cases, and all these must be attended to very carefully.

35. THE BRANCHES. There are two; for nouns are some of them PROPER and some COMMON. A noun is called *proper*, when it is used to distinguish one particular individual from the rest of the individuals of the same species, or kind; as *James*, *Botley*, *Hampshire*. The noun is called *common*, when it applies to all the individuals of a kind; as, *man*, *village*, *county*. *Botley* is a proper noun, because all villages have not this name; but *village* is a common noun, because all villages are called by that name; the name is common to them all. Several persons have the name of *James*, to be sure, and there is a *Hampshire* in America as well as in England; but, still, these are proper names, because the former is not common to *all* men, nor the latter to all counties. Proper nouns take no articles before them, because the extent of their meaning is clearly pointed out in the word itself. In figurative language, of which you will know more by-and-by, we sometimes, however, use the article, as, "Goldsmith is a very fine poet, but not to

be compared to *the* Popes, *the* Drydens, or *the* Miltons." And again "I wish I had the wit of *a Swift*." We also use the definite article before proper nouns when a common noun is understood to be left out; as, *the* Thames, meaning the *River* Thames. Also when we speak of more than one person of the same name, as "*the Henries, the Edwards*."

36. THE NUMBERS. These are the singular and the plural. The singular is the original word; and, in general, the plural is formed by adding an *s* to the singular; as, *dog, dogs*. But, though the greater part of our nouns form their plurals from the singular in this simple manner, there are many which do not; while there are some nouns which have no plural number at all, and some which have no singular. Therefore, considering the above to be the FIRST RULE, I shall add other rules with regard to the nouns which do not follow that rule. The SECOND RULE: Nouns, the singular numbers of which end in *ch, sh, s*, or *x*, require *es* to be added in order to form their plural number; as, *church, churches*; *brush, brushes*; *lass, lasses*; *fox, foxes*. The THIRD RULE is, that nouns, which end in *y*, when the *y* has a consonant coming immediately before it, change the *y* into *ies* in forming their plurals; as, *quantity, quantities*. But, you must mind that, if the *y* be not immediately preceded by a consonant, the words follow the first rule, and take only an *s* in addition to their singular; as, *day, days*. The FOURTH RULE is, that nouns, which end in a single *f*, or in *fe*, form

their plurals by changing the *f*, or *fe*, into *ves*, as, *loaf, loaves*; *wife, wives*. But, this rule has exceptions in the following words which follow the first rule; *dwarf, mischief, handkerchief, chief, relief, grief*. The two last are seldom used in the plural number—but, as they sometimes are, I have included them. The FIFTH RULE is, that the following nouns have their plural in *en*; *man, men*; *woman, women*; *ox, oxen*; *child, children*; and *brethren* is used sometimes as the plural of *brother*. The SIXTH RULE is, that all which nature, or art, or habit has made plural has no singular; as, *ashes, annals, bellows, thanks, breeches, entrails, scissors, tongs*, and some others. There are also some nouns which have no plural, such as those which express the qualities, or propensities, or feelings of the mind or heart; as, *honesty, meekness, compassion*. There are, further, several names of herbs, metals, minerals, liquids, and of fleshy substances, which have no plurals; to which may be added the names of almost all sorts of grains. There are exceptions here; for, while *wheat* has no plural, *oats* has seldom any singular. But all these words, and others which are irregular in a similar way, are of such very common use, that you will hardly ever make a mistake in applying them. There remain to be noticed, however, some words, which are too irregular in the forming of their plurals to be brought under any distinct head, even of irregularity. I will, therefore, insert these as they are used in both numbers.

Singular.	*Plural.*	*Singular.*	*Plural.*
Die,	Dice, Dies.	Goose,	Geese.
Mouse,	Mice.	Penny,	Pence.
Louse,	Lice.	Tooth,	Teeth.
Deer,	Deer.	Foot,	Feet.

37. THE GENDERS. In the French language, and many other languages, every noun is of the masculine or of the feminine gender. *Hand*, for instance, is of the feminine and *arm* of the masculine; *pen* of the feminine and *paper* of the masculine. This is not the case with our language, which, in this respect, has followed the order of nature. The names of all males are of the masculine gender; the names of all females are of the feminine gender; and all other nouns are of the neuter gender. And, you must observe, that, even in speaking of living creatures, of which we do not know the gender, we consider them to be of the neuter.

38. THE CASES OF NOUNS. The word case, as applied to the concerns of life, has a variety of meanings, or of different shades of meaning; but, its general meaning is, *state of things*, or *state of something*. Thus, we say, "in *that case*, I agree with you"; meaning, "that being the state of things, or that being the state of the matter, I agree with you." Lawyers are said "to make out their case, or not to make out their case"; meaning the state of the matter, which they have undertaken to prove. So, when we say, that a horse is *in good case*, we mean that he is in a *good state*. Nouns may be in different *states*, or *situations*, as to other nouns, or other words. For instance, a noun

may be the name of a person who *strikes* a horse, or of a person who *possesses* a horse, or of a person whom a horse *kicks*. And these different situations, or states, are, therefore, called *cases*.

39. You will not quite fully comprehend the use of these distinctions till you come to the letter on verbs; but, it is necessary to explain here the nature of these cases, in order that you may be well prepared for the use of the terms, when I come to speak of the verbs. In the Latin language each noun has several *different endings* in order to denote the different cases in which it may be. In our language there is but one of the cases of nouns which is expressed or denoted by a change in the ending of the noun; and of this change I will speak presently.

40. There are three Cases: the *Nominative*, the *Possessive*, and the *Objective*. A noun is in the *Nominative* case, when it denotes a person, or thing, which *does* something or *is* something; as, *Richard strikes*; *Richard is good*.

41. A noun is in the *Possessive* case, when it names a person or thing that *possesses* some other person or thing, or when there is one of the persons or things *belonging* to the other; as, *Richard's hat*; *the mountain's top*; *the nation's fleet*. Here *Richard*, *mountain* and *nation*, are in the Possessive case, because they denote persons or things which possess other persons or things, or have other persons or things *belonging* to them. And here is that change in the ending of the noun, of which I spoke above. You see that *Richard*, *mountain*, *nation*, have each of them, an *s* added, and a

mark of elision over; that is to say, a comma, placed above the line, between the last letter of the word and the *s*. This is done for the purpose of distinguishing this case from the plural number; or, at least, it answers this purpose in all cases where the plural of the noun would end in an *s*; though there are different opinions as to the origin of its use. In nouns, which do not end their plurals in *s*, the mark of elision would not appear to be absolutely necessary. We might write *mans* mind, *womans* heart; but it is best to use the mark of elision. When plural nouns end with *s*, you must not add an *s* to form the possessive case, but only put the elision mark after the *s*, which ends the noun; as, *mountains'* tops; *nations'* fleets; *lasses'* charms. Observe, however, that in every instance, the possessive case may be expressed by a turn of the words; as, *the hat of Richard*; *the top of the mountain*; *the fleet of the nation*; *the mind of man*; and so on. The nouns, notwithstanding this turn of the words, are still in the possessive case; and, as to when one mode of expression is best, and when the other, it is a matter which must be left to taste.

42. A noun is in the *Objective* Case, when the person or thing that it means or denotes is the *object*, or *end*, of some act or of some movement, of some kind or other. Richard *strikes Peter*; Richard gave a blow *to Peter*; Richard goes *after Peter*; Richard *hates Peter*; Richard *wants arms*; Richard seeks *after fame*; falsehood leads *to mischief*; oppression *produces*

resistance. Here you see, that all these nouns in the Objective case, are the *object*, the *end*, or the *effect*, of something done or felt by some person or thing, and which other person, or thing, is in the Nominative case.

LETTER VI.

ETYMOLOGY OF PRONOUNS.

MY DEAR JAMES,

43. You will now refer to paragraphs 16, 17, and 18, in Letter III; which paragraphs will refresh your memory as to the general nature and use of *Pronouns*. Then, in proceeding to become well acquainted with this Part of Speech you will first observe, that there are four classes, or descriptions, of Pronouns; first, the *Personal*; second, the *Relative*; third, the *Demonstrative*; and, fourth, the *Indefinite*.

44. In PERSONAL PRONOUNS there are four things to be considered; the person, the number, the gender, and the case.

45. There are *three* persons. The pronoun which represents, or stands, in the place of the name of the person who speaks, is in the *first* person; that which stands in the place of the name of the person who is spoken to, is in the *second* person; that which stands in the place of the name of the person who is spoken of, is called the *third* person. This circumstance of person you will, by-and-by, find to be of great moment; because, as you will see, the verbs vary their endings sometimes to correspond with the person of the pronoun; and,

therefore, you ought to pay strict attention to it at the outset.

46. The *Number* is either singular or plural, and the pronouns vary their spelling to express a difference of number; as in this table, which shows, at once, all the persons and all the numbers.

	Singular.	*Plural*
1st. Pers.	I,	We.
2nd Pers.	Thou,	You.
3rd Pers.	He (*see* 47),	They.

47. The next thing is the *Gender*. The pronouns of the first and second person have no changes to express gender; but the third person singular has changes for that purpose: *he*, *she*, or *it*; and I need not point out to you the cases where one of these ought to be used instead of the other.

48. The *Case* is the last thing to be considered in personal pronouns. The meaning of the word *case*, as used in the rules of Grammar, I have fully explained to you in Letter V, paragraph 38. In paragraphs 39, 40, 41, and 42 in that same letter, I have treated of the distinction between the cases. Read all these paragraphs again before you proceed further; for now you will find their meaning more clearly explained to you; because the personal pronouns, and also some of the other pronouns, have *different endings*, or are composed of *different letters*, in order to point out the *different cases* in which they are; as, *he*, *his*, *him*.

49. The personal pronouns have, like the nouns, three cases: the *Nominative*, the *Possessive*, and the *Objective*. The following table

exhibits the whole of them at one view, with all the changes of person, number, gender, and case.

SINGULAR NUMBER.

		Nominative.	*Possessive.*	*Objective.*
1st	*Pers.*	I,	My, Mine,	Me.
2nd	*Pers.*	Thou,	Thy, Thine,	Thee.
3rd	*Masc.*	He,	His,	Him.
Pers.	*Fem.*	She,	Her, Hers,	Her.
	Neuter.	It,	Its,	It.

PLURAL NUMBER.

		Nominative.	*Possessive.*	*Objective.*
1st	*Pers.*	We,	Our, Ours,	Us.
2nd	*Pers.*	You,	Your, Yours,	You.
3rd	*Masc.*	They,		
Pers.	*Fem.*	They,	Their, Theirs,	Them.
	Neuter.	They,		

50. Upon this table some remarks are necessary. In the *Possessive* case of *I, thou, she, we, you,* and *they*, there are two different words; as, *my* or *mine*; but, you know, that the former is used when followed by the name of the person or thing possessed; and that the latter is used when not so followed; as, *this* is *my pen*; *this* pen *is mine*. And it is the same with regard to the possessive cases of *thou, she, we, you,* and *they*.

51. *Thou* is here given as the second person singular; but, common custom has set aside the rules of Grammar in this case; and, though we, in particular cases, still make use of *thou* and *thee*, we generally make use of *you* instead of either of them.

52. The words *self* and *selves* are sometimes added to the personal pronouns; as,

myself, thyself, himself; but, as these compounded words are liable to no variation that can possibly lead to error, it will be useless to do anything further than just notice them.

53. The pronoun *it*, though a personal pronoun, does not always stand for, or, at least, appear to stand for, any noun whatever; but is used in order to point out *a state of things*, or *the cause of something* produced. For instance: "*It* froze hard last night, and *it* was so cold, that *it* was with great difficulty the travellers kept on their journey." Now, what was it that froze so hard? Not the *frost*; because frost is the effect and not the cause of freezing. We cannot say that it was the weather that froze; because the freezing constituted in part the weather itself. No, the pronoun *it* stands, in this place, for a state of things or circumstances; and this sentence might be written thus: "The freezing was so hard last night, and the cold was so severe, that the travellers found great difficulty in keeping on their journey." Let us take another example or two: *It* will rain to-night. *It* will be fine to-morrow." That is to say: "A state of things called rain will exist to-night; and to-morrow a state of things called fine weather." Another example: "*It* is delightful to see brothers and sisters living in uninterrupted love to the end of their days." That is to say: "The state of things, which exhibits brothers and sisters living in uninterrupted love to the end of their days, is delightful to see."

54. In order, however, further to illustrate

this matter in this place, I will make a remark or two upon the use of the word *there*. Example: "*There are* many men who cannot read and write." Now, you know, the word *there*, in its usual sense, has reference to *place*: yet it has no such reference here. The meaning is: "that many men *are in existence*, who cannot read and write." Again: "*There never was* anything so beautiful as that flower." That is to say: "Anything so beautiful as that flower *never existed*, or never was *in being*."

55. We now come to the RELATIVE PRONOUNS, of which class there are only *three*; namely, *who*, *which*, and *that*. The two latter always remain the same, through all numbers, genders, and cases; but, the pronoun *who* changes its ending, in order to express the possessive and objective cases; as, *who*, *whose*, *whom*.

56. These pronouns are called *relative*, because they always *relate* directly to some noun or some personal pronoun, or to some combination of words, which is called the *Antecedent*; that is to say, the person or thing *going before*. Thus: "*The soldier*, *who* was killed at the siege." *Soldier* is the antecedent. Again: "The *men* (if I am rightly informed) *who* came hither last night, *who* went away this morning, *whose* money you have received, and to *whom* you gave a receipt, are natives of South America." *Men* is here the *antecedent*; and, in this sentence there are all the variations to which this pronoun is liable.

57. *Who*, *whose*, and *whom* cannot be used correctly as relatives to any nouns or pronouns,

which do not represent *men, women,* or *children.* It is not correct to say, the horse, or the dog, or the tree, *who* was so and so; or to *whom* was done this or that; or, *whose* colour, or anything else was such and such. But, the word *that,* as a relative pronoun, may be applied to nouns of all sorts; as, the boy *that* ran; the *horse that* galloped; the *tree that* was blown down.

58. *Which,* as a relative pronoun, is used for things and animals but not people; as, the *horse which* galloped; the *tree which* was blown down.

59. The DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS are so called because they more particularly mark, or demonstrate, the nouns before which they are placed, or for which they sometimes stand. They are, *this, these, that, those* and *what.* The use of them is so well known, and is liable to so little error, that my chief object in giving them this separate place is to show you the difference between *that,* when a *relative* and when *not a relative.* Take an example: "*That* is not the man, as far as I am able to discover, *that* came hither last night." The first of these *thats* does not *relate* to the man; it merely points him out; but the latter *relates* to him, carries you back to him, and supplies the place of repetition. This same word, *that,* is sometimes a *Conjunction*; as, "*That* is not the man, as far as I can discover, *that* came hither last night, and *that* was so ill *that* he could hardly walk." The relative is repeated in the third *that;* but, the fourth

that is merely a conjunction, serving to *connect* the effect of the illness with the cause.

60. *What*, together with *who*, *whose*, *whom*, and *which*, are employed in *asking questions*, and are, sometimes, ranged under a separate head, and called *Interrogative* pronouns. I have thought this unnecessary; but, here is an observation of importance to attend to; for, *which*, though as a *relative*, it cannot be applied to the intellectual species, is, as an *interrogative*, properly applied to that species: as, "*Which* man was it who spoke to you?"

61. *What* sometimes stands for both noun and relative pronoun, as: "*What* I want is well known." That is to say, "*The thing which* I want is well known." Indeed, *what* has, in all cases, this extended signification; for, when in the way of inquiry as to words which we have not clearly understood, we say, *What*? Our full meaning is: Repeat to us *that which* you have said, or the *words which* you have spoken.

62. The INDETERMINATE or IMPERSONAL PRONOUNS are so called, because they express their objects in a general and indeterminate manner. Several of them are also *adjectives*. It is only where they are employed alone, that is to say, without nouns, that they ought to be regarded as pronouns. For instance: "*One* is always hearing of the unhappiness of *one* person or *another*." The first of these *ones* is a pronoun; the last is an adjective, as is also the word *another*; for a noun is understood to follow, though it is not expressed. These pronouns are as follows: *one*, *any*, *each*,

none, *some*, *other*, *every*, *either*, *many*, *whoever*, *whatever*, *neither*, and some few others, but all of them words invariable in their orthography, and all of very common use.

LETTER VII.

ETYMOLOGY OF ADJECTIVES.

My Dear James,

63. In Letter III, paragraph 19, I have described what an *Adjective* is. You will, therefore, now read over that paragraph carefully, before you proceed in studying the contents of the present letter.

64. The adjectives have no changes to express gender, or case; but, they have changes to express *Degrees of Comparison*. As adjectives describe the qualities and properties of nouns, and as these may be possessed in a higher degree in one case than in another, the adjectives have degrees of comparison; that is to say, changes in their endings, to suit these varying circumstances. A tree may be *high*, but another may be *higher*, and a third may be the *highest*. Adjectives have, then, these three degrees; the first degree, or rather, the primitive word, is called the *Positive*; the second, the *Comparative*; the third, the *Superlative*. For the forming of these degrees I shall give you four rules; and, if you pay strict attention to these rules, you will need be told very little more about this Part of Speech.

65. First Rule. Adjectives in general, which end in a consonant, form their compara-

tive degree by adding *er* to the positive, and form their superlative degree by adding *est* to the positive, as :

Positive.	*Comparative.*	*Superlative.*
Rich,	Richer,	Richest.

66. SECOND RULE. Adjectives which end in *e*, add, in forming their comparative, only an *r*, and in forming their superlative, *st*, as :

Positive.	*Comparative.*	*Superlative.*
Wise,	Wiser,	Wisest.

67. THIRD RULE. When the positive ends in *d*, *g*, or *t*, and when these consonants are, at the same time, preceded by a *single vowel*, the consonant is doubled in forming the comparative and superlative, as :

Positive.	*Comparative.*	*Superlative.*
Red,	Redder,	Reddest.
Big,	Bigger,	Biggest.
Hot,	Hotter,	Hottest.

But, if the *d*, *g*, or *t*, be preceded by another consonant, or by more than one vowel, the final consonant is not doubled in the forming of the two latter degrees, as :

Positive.	*Comparative.*	*Superlative.*
Kind,	Kinder,	Kindest.
Neat,	Neater,	Neatest.

68. FOURTH RULE. When the positive ends in *y*, preceded by a consonant, the *y* changes to *ie* in the other degrees.

Positive.	*Comparative.*	*Superlative.*
Lovely,	Lovelier,	Loveliest.
Pretty,	Prettier,	Prettiest.

69. There are some adjectives which can be reduced to no rule, and which must be considered as irregular, as :

Positive.	*Comparative.*	*Superlative.*
Good,	Better,	Best.
Bad,	Worse,	Worst.
Little,	Less,	Least.
Much,	More,	Most.

70. Some adjectives can have no degrees of comparison, because their signification admits of no augmentation ; as, *all, each, every, any, several, very, some,* and all the numerical adjectives ; as, *one, two, three* ; *first, second, third.*

71. Adjectives which end in *most* are superlative, and admit of no change ; as, *utmost, uppermost.*

72. However, you will observe, that all adjectives which admit of comparison, may form their degrees by the use of the words *more* and *most,* as :

Positive.	*Comparative.*	*Superlative.*
Rich,	More Rich,	Most Rich.
Tender,	More Tender,	Most Tender.

When the positive contains but one syllable, the degrees are usually formed by adding to the positive according to the four rules. When the positive contains two syllables, it is a matter of taste which method you shall use in forming the degrees. The ear is, in this case, the best guide. But, when the positive contains more than two syllables, the degrees must be formed by the use of *more* and *most.* We may say tender and tenderest, pleasant and pleasantest, prettier and prettiest ; but who could tolerate delicater and delicatest ?

LETTER VIII.

ETYMOLOGY OF VERBS.

My Dear James,

73. The first thing you have to do in beginning your study as to this important part of speech, is to read again very slowly and carefully paragraphs 20, 21, and 22, in Letter III. Having, by well attending to what is said in those paragraphs, learned to distinguish *Verbs* from the words belonging to other Parts of Speech, you will now enter, with a clear head, on an inquiry into the variations to which the words of this Part of Speech are liable.

74. Kinds of Verbs. Verbs are considered *Active* or *Passive*. A verb is called active when it expresses an action which is produced by the nominative of the sentence; as "Pitt *restrained* the Bank." It is passive, when it expresses an action, which is received, or endured, by the person or thing which is the nominative of the sentence; as, "The Bank is *restrained*."

75. It is of great consequence that you clearly understand these distinctions, because I shall, by-and-by, use these terms very frequently. And, in order to give you a proof of the necessity of attending to these distinctions, I will here give you a specimen of the errors, which are sometimes committed by those who do not understand Grammar. This last-mentioned verb, *to lie*, becomes in the past tense, *lay*. Thus: "Dick *lies* on a bed now,

but, some time ago, he *lay* on the floor." This verb is often confounded with the verb *to lay*, which is an *active* verb, and which becomes, in its past tense, *laid*. Thus: "I *lay* my hat on the table to-day, but yesterday I *laid* it on the shelf."

76. Having thus given you the means of distinguishing the kinds of verbs, I now proceed to matters which are common to all the kinds. There are four things to be considered in a verb: the *Person*, the *Number*, the *Time*, and the *Mood*.

77. THE PERSON.—Read again Letter VI, on the Etymology of Pronouns. You will there clearly see the use of this distinction about persons; and, as I have told you, you will find that it is a matter of great consequence; because it will now, at once, be evident to you, that, unless the distinction of person be attended to, almost every sentence must be erroneous.

78. The verb must *agree* in person with the *noun* or the *pronoun*, which is the nominative of the sentence. Look back at Letter V, and at paragraphs 38, 39, 40, and 41, in order to refresh your memory as to the *nominative* and other cases. The verb, then, must *agree* with the nominative; as, "I *write*; he *writes*." To say, "I *writes*; he *write*," these would be both erroneous.

79. Look back at the explanation about the persons in the Etymology of Pronouns in Letter VI. There are *three persons*; but, our verbs have no variation in their spelling, except for the *third person singular*. For we say: "I *write*, you *write*, we *write*, they *write*"; and only "he, she, or it *writes*." This, then, is a

very plain matter. The second person singular need not be considered, as it is obsolete.

80. NUMBER is a matter equally plain, seeing that our verbs do not, except in one or two instances, vary their endings to express number. But, when several nouns, or pronouns, come together, care must be taken to make the verb agree with them; as, "Benbow and Johnstone *resist* the tyrants." Not *resists*. But this will be more fully discussed in the Syntax.

81. THE TENSE.—The verb has variations to express the *time* of an action; as, "Smith *writes* a Circular Letter; Smith *wrote* a Circular letter; Smith *will write* a Circular Letter." Again: "The Queen *defies* the tyrants; the Queen *defied* the tyrants; the Queen *will defy* the tyrants." The *Tenses* of a Verb are, therefore, called the *present*, the *past*, and the *future*.

82. THE MOODS.—The Moods of verbs are the *different manners* of expressing an action, or a state of being, which manners are sometimes *positive*, sometimes *conditional*, and sometimes *indeterminate*; and there are *changes*, or *variations* in the spelling, or writing, of the verb, or of the little words used with the verb, in order to express this difference in *manner* and sense. I will give you an instance: "He walks fast." "If he walk fast, he will fatigue himself." In most other languages, the verb changes its form very often and very much to make it express the different moods. In ours it does not; because we have little words called *auxiliaries*, which we use with the verbs instead of varying the form of the verbs

themselves. To make this matter clear, I will give you an example of the English compared with the French language in this respect.

English.	*French.*
I march,	je marche,
I marched,	je marchais,
I might march,	je marchasse,
I should march.	je marcherais.

There are other variations in the French verb; but we effect the purpose of these variations by the use of the auxiliaries, *shall*, *may*, *might*, *could*, *would*, and others.

83. The Moods are four in number: the *Infinitive*, the *Indicative*, the *Subjunctive*, and the *Imperative*. Besides these there are the two *participles*, of which I shall speak presently.

84. The *Infinitive Mood* is the verb in its primitive state; as, *to march*. And this is called the *infinitive*, because it is without bounds or limit. It merely expresses the action of marching, without any constraint as to person, or number, or time. The little word, *to*, makes in fact, a *part of the verb*. This word, *to*, is of itself, a *preposition*; but, as prefixed to verbs, it is merely a sign of the *infinitive* mood. In other languages, there is no such sign. In the French, for instance, *aller*, means *to go*: *écrire*, means *to write*. Thus, then, you will bear in mind, that, in English, the *to* makes a part of the verb itself when in the *infinitive* mood.

85. The *Indicative Mood* is that by which we express an action, or state of being, positively; that is to say, without any *condition*, or any dependent circumstance. It merely indi-

cates the action or state of being, without being subjoined to anything which renders the action or state of being dependent on any other action or state of being. Thus: "He *writes*:" this is the *indicative*.

86. But, the *Subjunctive Mood* comes into use, when I say: "If he *write*, the guilty tyrants will be ready with their dungeons and axes." In this case, there is something *subjoined*; and, therefore, this is called the *subjunctive* mood. Observe, however, that, in our language, there is no very great use in this distinction of moods; because, for the most part, our little auxiliaries do the business, and they never vary in the letters of which they are composed. The distinction is useful only as regards the employment of verbs without the auxiliaries, and where the auxiliaries are left to be understood; as in the above case: "If he *should write*, the guilty tyrants would be ready." And, observe, further, that, when the auxiliaries are used, or understood, the verb retains its original, or primitive form, throughout all the persons, numbers, and tenses.

87. The *Imperative Mood* is mentioned here merely for form's sake. It is that state of the verb which *commands, orders, bids, calls to,* or *invokes*; as, *Come* hither; *be* good; *march* away; *pay* me.

88. The *Participles*, however, are different in point of importance. They are of two sorts, the *present* and the *past*. The former ends always in *ing*, and the latter is generally the same as the past tense of the verb out of which

it grows. Thus, *working* is a present participle, and *worked* a past participle. They are called participles because they *partake* of the qualities of other Parts of Speech as well as of verbs. For instance: "I am *working*; *working* is laudable; a *working* man is more worthy of honour than a lazy person who lives in idleness." In the first instance, *working* is a *verb*; in the second a *noun*; in the third an *adjective*. So, in the case of the past participle: I *worked* yesterday; that is, *worked* mortar. The first is a verb, the last an adjective.

89. Thus have I gone through all the circumstances of change to which verbs are liable. I will now give you the complete *conjugation* of a verb. *To conjugate*, in its usual acceptation, means to *join together*; and, as used by grammarians, it means, to place under one view all the *variations* in the form of a verb; beginning with the Infinitive Mood and ending with the Participle. I will now lay before you, then, the conjugation of the verb *to work*, exhibiting that verb in all its persons, numbers, tenses, and moods.

INFINITIVE MOOD — *To work.*

INDICATIVE MOOD.

PRESENT TENSE.

Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st Pers.* I work,	We work,
2*nd. Pers.* Thou workest,	You work,
3*rd. Pers.* He, she, or it works.	They work.

PAST TENSE

Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st. Pers.* I worked,	We worked,
2*nd Pers.* Thou workedst,	You worked,
3*rd Pers.* He worked.	They worked.

FUTURE TENSE.

	Singular.	*Plural.*
1st Pers.	I shall, or will work,	We shall, or will work,
2nd Pers.	Thou shalt, or wilt work,	You shall, or will work.
3rd Pers.	He shall or will work.	They shall, or will work,

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD.

1st S. If I work, or may, might, could, would or should work.
2nd S. If thou work, or may, might, could, would or should work.
3rd S. If he, she, or it work, or may, might, could, would or should work.
1st P. If we work, or may, might, could, would or should work.
2nd P. If you work, or may, might, could, would or should work.
3rd P. If they work, or may, might, could, would or should work.

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

Singular.	*Plural.*
Let me work,	Let us work,
Work thou,	Work you.
Let him work.	Let them work.

PARTICIPLES.

PRESENT = *Working.* PAST = *Worked.*

90. Some grammarians put in their conjugations what they call the *compound tenses*; as, I *have worked*, I *had worked*, I *shall have worked*, I *may have worked*, and so on. But this can only serve to fill up a book; for all these consist merely in the introduction and use of the verb *to have* in its various parts. In the above conjugation all the changes or variations of the

verb are exhibited ; and it is those changes and variations, which, under the present head, form the important object of our inquiry.

91. The verbs *to have* and *to be* are of great use in our language. They are called *auxiliary verbs*. *To let* and *to do* are also called auxiliaries ; but they are of far less importance than *to have* and *to be*. Before, however, I say more on the subject of these auxiliaries, I must speak of all the verbs as *regular* or *irregular*, just observing here, that the word auxiliary means *helper*, or *helping*.

92. Verbs are called *regular*, when they have their changes or variations according to a certain *rule* or manner. Thus : " I *walk*, I *walked* ; I *work*, I *worked*." But, I cannot say, " I *writed*" : I must say, " I *wrote*." Now, observe that we call *regular* verbs all those which end their *past tense* of the *Indicative* and their *past participle* in *ed* ; and, if you now look back at the conjugation of the verb *to work*, you will find that that is a regular verb. Indeed, this is the case with almost all our verbs. But, there are some little irregularities even here, and they must be very well attended to, because a want of attention to them leads to very great errors even as to spelling.

93. These little irregularities I shall notice under five separate heads ; and, if you should forget, at any time, what has been said on the subject, a reference to these will, in a moment, set you right. 1.—The verb *to work* is perfectly regular, for it has *ed* added to it, in order to form the *past tense*, and also in order to form the

past participle. It is the same with the verbs *to walk, to turn, to abandon*, and numerous others. But, if the *infinitive*, that is to say, the primitive or original word, ends in *e*, then *d* only is added in the past tense and participle, and *st* instead of *est* after thou ; as, in the case of *to move*, which becomes *moved* and *movest*. You have seen, also, in the case of the verb *to work*, that we add only an *s* to form the third person singular of the present of the indicative ; *he works*. But if the infinitive ends in *h*, *s*, *x*, or *z*, then *es* must be added ; as, *to wish, he wishes* ; *to toss, he tosses* ; *to box, he boxes*. II.—When the infinitive ends in *y*, and when that *y* has a consonant immediately before it, the *y* is changed into *ie* to form the third person singular of the present of the indicative ; as, *to reply, he replies*. But (and I beg you to mark it well), if the ending *y* has a vowel immediately before it, the verb follows the general rule, in the formation of the third person singular of the present of the indicative ; as, *to delay, he delays* ; and not *he delaies*. It is the same in the second person singular ; as, *to reply, thou repliest* ; *to delay, thou delayest*. III.—When the infinitive ends in *y*, with a consonant immediately before it, the past tense of the indicative and the past participle are formed by using an *i* instead of the *y* ; as, *to reply, he replied* ; *to deny, it was denied*. But, if the *y* be preceded by a vowel, *ed* is added to the *y* in the usual manner ; as, *to delay, he delayed*. IV.—The *present participle*, which always ends in *ing*, is, in general, formed by simply adding the *ing* to the infinitive ; as,

to work, working; *to talk, talking*. But, if the infinitive ends in a single *e*, the *e* is dropped; as, *to move, moving*. The verb *to be* is an exception to this; but, then, that is an *irregular* verb. It is when the infinitive ends in a single *e*, mind; for, if the *e* be double, the general rule is followed; as, *to free, freeing*. When the infinitive ends in *ie*, those letters are changed into *y* in the forming of the present participle; as, *to lie, lying*. v.—When the infinitive ends in a *single consonant*, which has a single vowel *immediately before it*, the final consonant is doubled, not only in forming the present participle, but also in forming the past tense of the indicative and the past participle; as, *to rap, rapping*; *I rapped, it was rapped*. But, observe well, this rule holds good only as to words of one syllable; for, if the infinitive of the verb has more than one syllable, the consonant is not doubled unless the accent be on the last syllable; and the accent means the main force, or weight, or sound of the voice in pronouncing the word. For instance, in the word to *open*, the accent is on the first syllable; and, therefore, we write *opening, opened*. But, when we come to the verb *to refer*, where we find the accent on the last syllable, we write *referring, referred*.

94. These irregularities, though very necessary to be attended to, do not prevent us from considering the verbs, which are subject to them, as *regular verbs*. The mark of a regular verb is, that its *past tense* and *past participle* end in *ed*; every verb, which does not answer to this mark, is *irregular*.

95. There are many *irregular verbs*, and I shall here insert a short list. All the irregularities (except the little irregularities just mentioned) which it is possible to find in an English verb (the *auxiliary verbs* excepted) are in the *past tense* and the *past participle* only. Therefore, it will be sufficient to give a list, showing, in those two instances, what are the irregularities of each verb; and, in order to render the list convenient, and to shorten the work of referring to it, I shall make it alphabetical. With the past tense of the several verbs I shall use the first person singular of the pronoun, in order to make my examples as clear as possible.

LIST OF IRREGULAR VERBS.

Infinitive	*Past Tense.*	*Participle.*
To be	I was	Been
To bear	I bore	Borne
To beat	I beat	Beaten
To become	I became	Become
To beget	I begot	Begotten
To begin	I began	Begun
To behold	I beheld	Beheld
To bend	I bent	Bent
To bind	I bound	Bound
To bite	I bit	Bitten
To bleed	I bled	Bled
To break	I broke	Broken
To bring	I brought	Brought
To catch	I caught	Caught
To choose	I chose	Chosen
To come	I came	Come
To cut	I cut	Cut
To do	I did	Done
To drink	I drank	Drunk
To eat	I ate	Eaten
To fall	I fell	Fallen
To feed	I fed	Fed
To feel	I felt	Felt
To find	I found	Found

LIST OF IRREGULAR VERBS.

Infinitive.	*Past Tense.*	*Participle.*
To fly	I flew	Flown
To forget	I forgot	Forgotten
To forgive	I forgave	Forgiven
To get	I got	Got
To go	I went	Gone
To have	I had	Had
To hear	I heard	Heard
To hide	I hid	Hidden
To keep	I kept	Kept
To know	I knew	Known
To lay	I laid	Laid
To leave	I left	Left
To lend	I lent	Lent.
To let	I let	Let
To lie	I lay	Lain
To lose	I lost	Lost
To pass	I passed	Past
To pay	I paid	Paid
To put	I put	Put
To read	I read	Read
To ring	I rang	Rung
To rise	I rose	Risen
To run	I ran	Run
To say	I said	Said
To see	I saw	Seen
To seek	I sought	Sought
To sell	I sold	Sold
To send	I sent	Sent
To show	I showed	Shown
To sing	I sang	Sung
To slay	I slew	Slain
To sleep	I slept	Slept
To smite	I smote	Smitten
To speak	I spoke	Spoken
To take	I took	Taken
To write	I wrote	Written

96. AUXILIARY VERBS.—In the present Letter, paragraph 91, I opened this part of my subject. The word *let* is the past tense and the past participle of the verb *to let*. It is used as an auxiliary, however, in the *present tense* and only in the *Imperative* mood; as, *let me go*;

let us go; *let him go*. That is to say, *leave me to go*; *leave us to go*; *leave him to go*. Perhaps, the meaning fully expressed, would be, act in such a way that I may be left to go, or suffered to go.

97. The auxiliary *do*, which, for the past tense, becomes *did*, is part of the verb *to do*, which in its past tense is *did*, and in its past participle *done*. In this sense, it is not an *auxiliary*, but a *principal* verb, and its meaning is equal to that of *to execute* or *to perform*; as, I *do my work*; I *execute my work*; I *perform my work*. As an auxiliary, or helper, it seems to denote the time of the principal verb; as I *do* walk; I *did* walk; and, we may say, I *do* execute my work; or I *do do* my work. In this last example the first *do* is an auxiliary, and the last *do* a principal verb. However, as I said before, *do* and *did*, used as auxiliaries, do a great deal more than merely express *time*. In fact, they are not often used for that purpose only. They are used for the purpose of affirming or denying in a manner peculiarly strong; as, I *do* work, means that I work, notwithstanding all that may be, or may have been said, or thought, to the contrary; or it means, that I work *now*, and have not done it at some other stated, or supposed time. It is, with the exception of time, the same as to the use of *did*. These are amongst those little words of vast importance, the proper force and use of which foreigners scarcely ever learn, and which we learn from our very infancy.

98. The verbs *to have* and *to be* are the two

great auxiliaries. These words demand an extraordinary portion of your attention. They are principal verbs as well as auxiliaries. The verb *to have*, as a principal verb, signifies possession; as, *I have a pen*; that is to say, *I possess a pen*. Then, this is a word of very great use indeed in its capacity of principal verb; for we say, *I have a headache*; *I have a hatred of such a thing*; *I have a mind to go*; and hundreds of similar phrases. *I possess a headache*, has the same *meaning*; but, the other is more agreeable to the natural turn of our language. As *auxiliary* this verb is absolutely necessary in forming what are called the *compound* tenses of other verbs, and those tenses are called *compound* because they are formed of *two or more verbs*. Suppose the subject to be of *my working*; and, that I want to tell you, that my work is *ended*; that I have *closed my work*. I cannot, in a short manner, tell you this without the *help* of the verb *to have*. To say, *I work*, or *I worked*, or *I will work*; these will not answer my purpose. No, I must call in the help of the verb *to have*, and tell you, I *have* worked. So, in the case of the past tense, I must say, I *had* worked; in the future, I *shall have* worked; in the subjunctive mood, I must say, I *may*, *might*, *could* or *should have* worked. If you reflect a little you will find a clear reason for employing the verb *to have* in this way; for, when I say, "I *have* worked," my words amount to this: that the *act of working* is now in *my possession*. It is *completed*, it is a thing I *own*, and, therefore, I say, I *have* it.

99. The verb *to be* signifies *existence* when used as a principal verb. "*To be ill, to be well, to be rich, to be poor,*" mean to *exist* in illness, in health, in riches, in poverty. This verb, in its *compound* tenses, requires the help of the verb, *to have*; as, I *have* been, I *had been*, I *shall have been*, and so on. As *auxiliary* this verb is used with the participles of other verbs; as, *to be working*, he *is working*, it *is worked*. Now, you will perceive, if you reflect, that these phrases mean, as follows; *existing in work*, he *exists in work*, it *exists in a worked state*. Both these verbs are sometimes used, at one and the same time, as auxiliaries to other principal verbs; as, I *have been* writing; I *have been* imprisoned; and so on; and, upon patient attention to what has already been said, you will find, that they retain, upon all occasions, their full meaning, of *possession* in the one case, and of *existence* in the other.

100. Now, my dear James, if I have succeeded in making clear to you the principle, out of which the use of these words, as auxiliaries, has arisen, I have accomplished a great deal; for, if well grounded in that principle, all the subsequent difficulties will speedily vanish before you.

101. I now proceed to close this long and important letter by presenting to you the conjugation of these two verbs, both of which are *irregular* and every irregularity is worthy of your strict attention.

INFINITIVE MOOD — *To have.*

INDICATIVE MOOD.

PRESENT TENSE.

	Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st*	*Pers.* I have,	We have,
2*nd*	*Pers.* Thou hast,	You have,
3*rd*	*Pers.* He, she, or it has.	They have.

PAST TENSE.

	Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st*	*Pers.* I had,	We had,
2*nd*	*Pers.* Thou hadst,	You had,
3*rd*	*Pers.* He, she, or it had.	They had.

FUTURE TENSE.

	Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st*	*Pers.* I shall, or will have,	We shall, or will have,
2*nd*	*Pers.* Thou shalt, or wilt have,	You shall, or will have,
3*rd*	*Pers.* He, she, or it shall, or will have.	They shall, or will have.

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD.

1*st* S. If I have, or may, might, would, could have.
2*nd* S. If thou have, or may, might, would, could have.
3*rd* S. If he, she, or it have, may, might, would, could have.
1*st* P. If we have, or may, might, would, could have.
2*nd* P. If you have, or may, might, would, could have.
3*rd* P. If they have, or may, might, would, could have.

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

	Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st*	*Pers.* Let me have,	Let us have,
2*nd*	*Pers.* Have thou,	Have you,
3*rd*	*Pers.* Let him, her, or it have.	Let them have.

PARTICIPLES.

PRESENT — *Having.* PAST — *Had.*

102. The verb *to be* is still more irregular, but a little attention to its irregularities will prevent all errors in the use of it.

INFINITIVE MOOD = *To be.*

INDICATIVE MOOD.

PRESENT TENSE.

	Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st*	*Pers.* I am,	We are,
2*nd*	*Pers.* Thou art,	You are,
3*rd*	*Pers.* He, she, or it is.	They are.

PAST TENSE.

	Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st*	*Pers.* I was,	We were,
2*nd*	*Pers.* Thou wast,	You were,
3*rd*	*Pers.* He, she, or it was.	They were.

FUTURE TENSE.

	Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st*	*Pers.* I shall, or will be,	We shall, or will be,
2*nd*	*Pers.* Thou shalt, or wilt be,	You shall, or will be,
3*rd*	*Pers.* He, she, or it shall, or will be.	They shall, or will be.

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD.

PRESENT TENSE.

1*st* *S.* If I be, or may, might, would, could, or should be.
2*nd* *S.* If thou be, or may, might, would, could, or should be.
3*rd* *S.* If he, she, or it be, or may, might, would, could, or should be.
1*st* *P.* If we be, or may, might, would, could, or should be.
2*nd* *P.* If you be, or may, might, would, could, or should be.
3*rd* *P.* If they be, or may, might, would, could, or should be.

PAST TENSE.

1*st*	*Pers.* If I were,	If we were,
2*nd*	*Pers.* If thou wert,	If you were,
3*rd*	*Pers.* If he, she, or it were.	If they were.

IMPERATIVE MOOD.

	Singular.	*Plural.*
1*st*	*Pers.* Let me be,	Let us be,
2*nd*	*Pers.* Be thou,	Be you,
3*rd*	*Pers.* Let him, her, or it be.	Let them be.

103. In the *Subjunctive mood*, I have made use of the conjunction, *if*, throughout all the conjugations of verbs. But a verb may be in that mood without an *if* before it. The *if* is only one of the marks of the mood. A verb is always in that mood, when the *action* or *state of being* expressed by the verb is expressed *conditionally*; or when the action or state of being is, in some way or other, *dependent* on some other action or state of being. But, of this I shall speak more at large when I come to the *Syntax* of Verbs.

104. There remain a few words to be said about the auxiliaries, the *defective verbs*, and the *impersonal* verbs. The auxiliaries, *may, might, can, could, will, would, shall, should,* and *must,* have all, originally, been verbs, though they have now become defective in almost all their parts, and serve only as signs to other verbs. *Will,* indeed, is part of a regular verb; as, *to will, they willed, they are willing, they will be willing.* The word *would* is certainly the past tense and past participle of the same verb; and, indeed, it is used as a principal verb now, in certain cases: as, "*I would he were rich*;" that is to say, I *desire,* or *am willing,* or it *is my will,* that he *should be* rich. But deep inquiries regarding the origin of these words are more curious than useful. A mere idea of the nature of their origin is enough. The word *ought* is a verb defective in most of its parts. It certainly, however, is no other than a part of the verb *to owe,* and is become *ought* by corruption. For instance; "*I ought to write to you,*" means

that "*I owe the performance of the act of writing to you.*" *Ought* is made use of only in the *present tense*, and, for that reason, a great deal has been lost to our language by this corruption. As to the verbs, which some grammarians have called *impersonal*, there are, in fact, no such things in the English language. By *impersonal* verb is meant, a verb that has no noun or pronoun for its nominative case; no person or thing that is the actor, or receiver of an action, or that is in being. Thus: "*It rains*," is by some called an *impersonal* verb; but the pronoun *it* represents the person. Look again at Letter VI, and at paragraphs 53 and 54. You will there find what it is that this *it*, in such cases, represents.

105. Thus I have concluded my Letter on the Etymology of Verbs, which is by far the most important part of the subject. Great as have been my endeavours to make the matter clear to you, I am aware, that after the first reading of this Letter, your mind will be greatly confused. You will have had a glimpse at everything in the Letter, but will have seen nothing clearly. But, my dear James, put the letter aside for a day or two; then read it again and again. Read it early, while your mind is clear, and while sluggards are snoring. Write it down. Lay it aside for another day or two. Copy your own writing. Think as you proceed; and, at the end of your copying, you will understand clearly all the contents of the Letter.

LETTER IX.

ETYMOLOGY OF ADVERBS.

106. In Letter III, and in paragraphs 23 and 24, you will find a description of this part of speech. Read again those two paragraphs, in order to refresh your memory. There is not much to be said about adverbs under the head of Etymology. They are words liable to few variations. Adverbs are very numerous and may be divided into five principal classes; that is to say, Adverbs of *time*, of *place*, of *order*, of *quality*, and of *manner*. This last class, which is the most numerous, is composed of those which are derived, immediately, from adjectives and which end in *ly*; as, *especially*, *particularly*, *thankfully*.

107. These adverbs, ending in *ly*, are, for the most part, formed by simply adding *ly* to the adjective; as, *especial* becomes *especially*; but, if the adjective ends in *y*, that *y* is changed into *i* in forming the adverb; as, *happy*, *happily*; *steady*, *steadily*. If the adjective ends in *le*, the *e* is dropped in forming the adverb; as, *possible*, *possibly*.

108. Some few adverbs have *degrees of comparison*; as, *often*, *oftener*, *oftenest*; and those which are derived from irregular adjectives, are irregular in forming their degrees of comparison; as *well*, *better*, *best*.

109. Some adverbs are *simple*, or *single*; others *compound*. The former consists of one word, the latter of two, or more words; as,

happily, *at present*, *now-a-days*; which last means, *at the days that now are*. Another adverb of this description is, *by-and-by*; which is used to express, *in a short time*. When adverbs are compound, the words composing them ought to be connected by a hyphen or hyphens, as in the above examples of *now-a-days* and *by-and-by*.

LETTER X.

ETYMOLOGY OF PREPOSITIONS.

110. Letter III, paragraph 25, has taught you of what description of words *Prepositions* are. The chief use of them is to express the different *relations* or *connections* which nouns have with each other, or, in which nouns stand with regard to each other; as, John gives money *to* Peter; Peter receives money *from* John. It is useless to attempt to go into curious inquiries as to the origin of prepositions. They never change their endings; they are always written in the same manner. Their use is the main thing to be considered; and that will become very clear to you, when you come to the Syntax.

LETTER XI.

ETYMOLOGY OF CONJUNCTIONS.

111. In Letter III, paragraph 26, you have had a description of this kind of word, and also some account of its uses. Some are called *copulative* conjunctions, and others *disjunctive*. They all serve to *join together* words, or parts of

sentences ; but, the former express *an union* in the actions, or a state of being, expressed by the verb ; as, *You and I talk.* The latter a disunion ; as, *You talk, but I act.* The words of this Part of Speech never vary in their endings. They are always spelt in one and the same way. In themselves they present no difficulty ; but, as you will see, by-and-by, to use them properly, with other words, in the forming of sentences, demands a due portion of your attention and care.

LETTER XII.

CAUTIONARY REMARKS.

My Dear James,

112. Before we enter upon SYNTAX, let me give you a caution or two with regard to the contents of the foregoing letters.

There are some words, which, under different circumstances, belong to more than one Part of Speech, as, indeed, you have seen in the participles. But this is by no means confined to that particular description of words. *I act.* Here *act* is a verb ; but the *act* performed by me shows the very same word in the capacity of a noun. *The message was sent by him ; he stood by at the time.* In the first of these examples *by* is a preposition ; in the last an adverb. Mind, therefore that it is the sense in which the word is used, and not the letters of which it is composed, that determines what is the Part of Speech to which it belongs.

113. Never attempt to get by rote any part

of your instructions. Whoever falls into that practice soon begins to esteem the powers of memory more than those of reason.

LETTER XIII.

SYNTAX GENERALLY CONSIDERED.

My Dear James,

114. In Letter II, paragraph 9, I shortly explained to you the meaning of the word SYNTAX, as that word is used in the teaching of grammar. Read that paragraph again.

115. We are, then, now entering upon this branch of your study; and it is my object to teach you how to give all the words you make use of their proper situation when you come to put them into sentences. Because, though every word that you make use of may be correctly spelt, that is to say, may have all the letters in it that it ought to have and no more than it ought to have, and though all the words may, at the same time, be the fit words to use in order to express what you wish to express, yet, for want of a due observance of the principles and rules of Syntax, your sentences may be incorrect and, in some cases, they may not express what you wish them to express.

116. I shall, however, carry my instructions a little further than the construction of independent sentences. I shall make some remarks upon the manner of putting sentences together, and on the things necessary to be understood, in order to enable a person to write a series of

sentences. These remarks will show you the use of figurative language, and will, I hope, teach you how to avoid the very common error of making your writing confused and unintelligible.

LETTER XIV.

SYNTAX.

The Points and Marks made use of in Writing.

MY DEAR JAMES,

117. There are, as I informed you in paragraph 9, Letter II, *points* made use of in the writing of sentences; and, therefore, we must first notice these; because, as you will soon see, the sense, or meaning, of the words is very much dependent upon the points which are used along with them. For instance: "*You will be rich if you be industrious, in a few years.*" Then again: "*You will be rich, if you be industrious in a few years.*" Here, though in both sentences the words and also the order of the words are precisely the same, the meaning of one of the sentences is very different from that of the other. The first sentence means, that you will, in a few years' time, be rich, if you be industrious now. The second means, that you will be rich, some time or other, if you be industrious in a few years from this time. And all this great difference in meaning is, as you must see, produced solely by the difference in the situation of the *comma*. Put another comma after the last word *industrious*, and the meaning becomes dubious. A memorable proof

of the great importance of attending to points was given to the English nation in the year 1817. A Committee of the House of Lords made a report to the House, respecting certain political clubs. A secretary of one of the clubs presented a petition to the House, in which he declared positively and offered to prove at the bar, that a part of the report was totally false. At first their lordships blustered; their high blood seemed to boil; but, at last, the Chairman of the Committee apologized for the report by saying, that there ought to have been a *full-stop* where there was only a *comma*, and that it was this, which made that false, which would otherwise have been and was intended to be true!

118. These points being, then, things of so much consequence in the forming of sentences, it is necessary that I explain to you the use of them before I proceed any further. There are four of them: the *Full-Stop*, or *Period*; the *Colon*; the *Semi-colon*; the *Comma*.

119. The *Full-Stop* is a single dot, thus (.), and it is used at the end of every complete sentence. That is to say, at the end of every collection of words, which makes a full and complete meaning, and is not necessarily connected with other collections of words. But a sentence may consist of several members or divisions, and then it is called a *compound* sentence. When it has no division, it is called a *simple* sentence; thus, "*The people suffer great misery.*" This is a simple sentence; but, "*The people suffer great misery and daily perish for*

want," is a *compound* sentence; that is to say, it is compounded, or made up, of two simple sentences. The full-stop must also be used after an abbreviated word.

120. The *Colon*, which is written thus (:), is next to the full-stop in requiring a complete sense in the words. It is, indeed, often used when the sense is complete, but when there is something still behind, which tends to make the sense fuller or clearer.

121. The *Semi-Colon* is written thus (;), and it is used to set off, or divide simple sentences, in cases where the comma is not quite enough to keep the meaning of the simple sentences sufficiently distinct.

122. The *Comma* is written thus (,), and is used to mark the shortest pauses in reading, and the smallest divisions in writing. It has, by some grammarians, been given as a rule, to use a comma to set off every part of a compound sentence, which part has in it a verb not in the infinitive mood; and, certainly, this is, in general, proper. But, it is not always correct: and, besides, commas are used, in numerous cases, to set off parts which have no verbs in them; and even to set off single words, which are not verbs; and of this the very sentence, which I am now writing, gives you ample proof. The comma marks the shortest pause that we make in speaking: and it is evident, that, in many cases, its use must depend upon taste. It is sometimes used to give emphasis, or weight, to the word after which it is put. Observe, now, the following two sentences: "*I was very well*

and cheerful last week ; but, am rather feeble and low-spirited now." "*I am very willing to yield to your kind requests ; but, I will set your harsh commands at defiance.*" Commas are made use of when phrases, that is to say, portions of words, are thrown into a sentence, and which are not absolutely necessary to assist in its grammatical construction. For instance: "There were, *in the year 1922*, petitions from half a million men, who, *as they distinctly alleged*, were suffering the greatest possible hardships." The two phrases, in italics, may be left out in the reading, and still the sentence will have its full grammatical construction.

123. Besides these points, however, there are certain grammatical signs, or marks, which are made use of in the writing of sentences ; i.e. the *Interrogation*, the *Exclamation*, the *Apostrophe*, and the *Hyphen*.

124. The mark of *Interrogation*, which is written thus (?), is used when a question is asked : as, "*Who has my pen ?*" "*What man is that ?*" In these and numerous other cases, the mark is not necessary to our clearly comprehending the meaning of the writer. But, this is not always the case. "What does he say ? Put the horse into the stable." Again : "What does he say ? Put the horse into the stable ?" In speaking, this great difference in the meaning, in this instance, would be fully expressed by the voice and manner of the speaker ; but, in writing, the mark of interrogation is, you see, absolutely necessary in order to accomplish the purpose.

125. The mark of *Exclamation*, is written thus (!), and, as its name denotes, is used to distinguish words or sentences that are exclamatory, from such as are not: "*What do you say!*" "*What do you say?*" The difference in the sense is very obvious here. Again: "*He is going away to-night!*" "*He is going away to-night.*" The last simply states the fact; but, the first besides stating the fact, expresses surprise at it.

126. The *Apostrophe*, or mark of *Elision*, is a comma, placed above the line, thus: ('). Elision means a *striking out*; and this mark is used for this purpose: as, *don't*, for *do not*; *tho'*, for *though*; *lov'd*, for *loved*. It is necessary as the mark of the possessive case of nouns, as you have seen in Letter V, paragraph 41. That is its use, and any other employment of it is an abuse.

127. The *Hyphen* is a little line, drawn to connect words, or parts of words; as in *sea-fish*, *water-rat*. For, here are two distinct words, though they, in these instances, make but one. Sometimes, the Hyphen is used to connect many words together: "The *never-to-be-forgotten* story of the forty thieves." When in writing, or in printing, a line ends with part of a word, a hyphen is placed after that part, in order to show that that part is to be joined in the reading, with that which begins the next line.

128. These are the ordinary grammatical marks; but, there are others used in writing for the purpose of saving time and words. The mark of *Quotation* or of *citing*. This mark

consists of two commas placed thus: "There were many men." It is used to enclose words, taken from other writings, or from people's discourses; and, indeed, it is frequently used to enclose certain sentences, or words, of a writer, when he wishes to mark them as wholly distinct from the general course of any statement that he is making, or of any instruction that he is giving. I have, for instance, in the writing of these letters to you, set off many of my examples by marks of *quotation*. In short, its use is to notify to the reader that such and such words, or such and such sentences, are not to be looked upon as forming part of the regular course of those thoughts which are at the present time coming from the mind of the writer.

129. The use of CAPITALS and ITALICS I will notice in this place. In the books printed before the middle of the eighteenth century, a capital letter was used as the first letter of every noun. Capitals are now used more sparingly. We use them at the beginning of every sentence which follows a full-stop; at the beginning of all proper nouns; at the beginning of all adjectives growing out of the names of countries, or nations; as, the *English* language; the *French* fashions; the *American* government; and at the beginning of each line of poetry. We use capitals, besides, at the beginning of any word, when we think the doing of it likely to assist in elucidating our meaning, but, in general, we use them as above stated. The use of *italic* characters, in print, is to point

out, as worthy of particular attention, the words distinguished by those characters. In writing with a pen, a stroke is drawn under such words as we wish to italicise.

130. The last thing I shall mention, under this head, is the caret (∧) which is used to point upwards to a part which has been omitted, and which is inserted between the line, where the caret is placed, and the line above it. Things should be called by their right names, and this should be known as the blunder mark. I would have you, my dear James, scorn the use of the thing. Think before you write ; let it be your custom always to write correctly and in a plain hand. When you write, bear constantly in mind, that someone is to read and to understand what you write. This will make your handwriting, and also your meaning plain. Far, I hope, from my dear James, will be the ridiculous and contemptible affectation of writing in a slovenly or illegible hand ; or, of signing his name otherwise than in plain letters.

LETTER XV.

SYNTAX, AS RELATING TO ARTICLES.

My Dear James,

131. Before you proceed to my instructions relative to the employing of *Articles*, you will do well to read again all the paragraphs in Letter IV. Our articles are so few in number, and they are subject to so little variation in their orthography, that very few errors can arise in the use of them. But, still, errors may

arise; and it will be necessary to guard you against them.

132. You will not fall into very gross errors in the use of the articles, but, nevertheless, note this passage: "The Chancellor informed the Queen of it, and she immediately sent for *the* Secretary and Treasurer." Now, it is not certain, here, whether the Secretary and Treasurer be not one and the same person; which uncertainty would have been avoided by a repetition of the article: "*the* Secretary and *the* Treasurer."

133. Nouns which express the whole of a species do not, in general, take the definite article; as, "*Grass* is good for horses, and *wheat* for men." Yet, in speaking of the appearance of the face of the country, we say, "*The* grass looks well; *the* wheat is blighted." The reason of this is, that we are in this last case, limiting our meaning to the grass and the wheat, which are on the ground at this time.

134. "Ten shillings *the* bushel," and like phrases, are perfectly correct. They mean "ten shillings *by the* bushel, or *for the* bushel." Instead of this mode of expression we sometimes use, "ten shillings *a* bushel"; that is to say, ten shillings *for a* bushel, or a bushel at a time.

LETTER XVI.

SYNTAX, AS RELATING TO NOUNS.

My Dear James,

135. Read again Letter V, the subject of which is the Etymology of Nouns. Nouns are

governed, as it is called, by verbs and prepositions, that is to say, these latter words cause nouns to be in such or such a case; and there must be *concord*, or an *agreement*, between the nouns and the other words, which, along with the nouns, compose a sentence.

136. But these matters will be best explained when I come to the Syntax of Verbs; for, until we take the verb into account, we cannot go far in giving rules for the forming of sentences. Under the present head, therefore, I shall content myself with doing little more than give some further account of the manner of using the *possessive case* of nouns; that being the only case to denote which of our nouns vary their endings.

137. This possessive case was pretty fully spoken of by me in the letter just referred to; but there are certain other observations to make with regard to the using of it in sentences. When the noun, which is in the possessive case, is expressed by a circumlocution; that is to say, by many words in lieu of one, the sign of the possessive case is joined to the last word: as, "John, the old farmer's wife." "Oliver, the spy's, evidence." It is, however, much better to say: "The wife of John, the old farmer." "The evidence of Oliver, the spy."

138. When two or more nouns in the possessive case follow each other, and are joined by a conjunction, the sign of the possessive case is, when the thing possessed is the same, put to the last noun only: as, "Peter, Joseph, and Richard's estate." In this example the thing

possessed being one and the same thing, the sign applies equally to each of the three possessive nouns. But, "Peter's, Joseph's, and Richard's estate," implies that each one has an estate: or, at least, it will admit of that meaning being given to it, while the former phrase will not.

139. Sometimes the sign of the possessive case is left out, and a hyphen is used in its stead: as, "Edwards, the *government-spy*."; that is to say, "the government's spy"; or "the spy *of the* government." These two words joined in this manner, are called a *compound* noun; and, to this compounding of nouns our language is very prone. We say, "*chamber-maid, horse-shoe, dog-collar*:" that is to say, *chamber's maid, horse's shoe, dog's collar.*

140. This is an advantage peculiar to few languages. It enables us to say much in the minimum of words. Brevity, of course, gives strength to speech; and after *clearness*, strength is the most valuable quality that writing or speaking can possess. "The Yorkshiremen flew to arms." If we could not compound our words, we must say, "the men of the shire of York flew to arms." When you come to learn French, you will soon see how much the English language is better than the French in this respect.

141. You must take care, when you use the possessive case, not to use after it words which create a confusion in meaning. Hume has this sentence: "They flew to arms and attacked *Northumberland's* house, *whom* they put to

death." We know what is meant, because *whom* can relate to persons only; but, if it had been an attack on Northumberland's *men*, the meaning would have been, that the *men* were put to death. However, the sentence, as it stands, is sufficiently incorrect. It should have been: "They flew to arms, attacked the house of Northumberland, and put him to death."

LETTER XVII.

SYNTAX, AS RELATING TO PRONOUNS.

My Dear James,

142. You will now read again Letter VI. It will bring you back to the subject of pronouns. You will bear in mind that personal pronouns *stand for*, or in the *place of*, nouns; and, that the greatest care ought always to be taken in using them, because, being small words, and in frequent use, the proper weight of them is very often unattended to.

143. You have seen that confusion arises from the want of taking care that the pronoun relates clearly to its nominative case, and that it is not left to be understood to relate to anything else. Little words, of great and sweeping influence, ought to be used with the greatest care; because errors in the using of them make great errors in point of meaning. In order to impress, at the outset, these precepts on your mind, I will give you an instance of this kind of error from Addison's *Spectator*, Number 411. "There are, indeed, but very few, who know

how to be idle and innocent, or have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal; every diversion *they* take, is at the expense of some one virtue or other, and *their* very first step out of business is into vice or folly."

144. Now, then, my dear James, let us see where the mistake lies. What does the pronoun *they* mean in this sentence of Mr. Addison? What noun does it *relate to*, or *stand for*? What noun is the *nominative* of the sentence? The nominative of the sentence is the word *few*, meaning few persons. Very well, then, the pronoun, *they*, relates to this nominative; and the meaning of the sentence is this: "That but few persons know how to be idle and innocent; that few *persons* have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal; that every diversion these few persons take is at the expense of some one virtue or other, and that the very first step of these few persons out of business is into vice or folly." So that the sentence says precisely the contrary of what the author meant. All this arises from the misuse of the pronoun *they*. If, instead of this word, the author had put, *people in general*, or *most people*, or *most men*, or any word or words, of the same meaning, all would have been right.

145. I will take another instance of the consequence of being careless in the use of personal pronouns. It is from Judge Blackstone, Book II, Chapter 6. "For, the custom of the manor has, in both cases, so far superseded the will of the Lord, that, provided the services be performed, or stipulated for by

fealty, he cannot, in the first instance, refuse to admit the heir of his tenant upon his death; nor, in the second, can he remove his present tenant so long as he lives." Here are *lord*, *heir*, and *tenant*, all confounded. We may guess at the judge's meaning; but, we cannot say, that we know what it is; we cannot say that we are certain whose life, or whose death, he is speaking of.

146. Never write a personal pronoun, without duly considering what *noun* it will, upon a reading of the sentence, be found to *relate to*. There must be a noun, expressed or understood, to which the pronoun clearly relates, or you will not write sense. "The *land-holder* has been represented as a monster which must be hunted down, and the *fund-holder* as a still greater evil, and both have been described as rapacious creatures, who take from the people fifteenpence out of every quartern loaf. *They* have been told that Parliamentary Reform is no more than a half-measure, changing only one set of thieves for another; and that *they* must go to the land, as nothing short of that would avail *them*." This is taken from the memorable report of a committee of the House of Lords, in 1817. Now, to what nouns do these pronouns relate? Who are the *nominatives* in the first sentence? The *land-holder* and the *fund-holder*, to be sure, and, therefore, to them do the pronouns relate. These Lords mean, doubtless, that the people had been told, that the people must go to the land; that nothing else would avail the people;

but, though they mean this, they do not say it; and this part of their report is as false in grammar as other parts of the report were in fact.

147. When there are two or more nouns, connected by a copulative conjunction, and when a personal pronoun is made use of to relate to them, or stand for them, you must take care that the personal pronoun agrees with them in number. "He was fonder of nothing than of *wit* and *raillery*; but, he is far from being happy in *it*." This, Doctor Blair, in his 19th Lecture, says of Lord Shaftesbury. Either *wit* and *raillery* are one and the same thing, or they are different things; if the former, one of the words is used unnecessarily; if the latter, the pronoun ought to have been *them* and not *it*.

148. Nouns of number, or multitude, such as *Mob, Parliament, Rabble, House of Commons, Regiment, Court of King's Bench, Den of Thieves*, and the like must have pronouns agreeing with them. It is quite wrong, for instance, to say of the House of Commons, "*they* refused to hear evidence against Castlereagh when Mr. Maddox accused him of having sold a seat." The House of Commons is here considered as a single body and the pronoun must, likewise, be singular,

149. As to *Gender*, it is hardly possible to make a mistake. There are no terminations to denote gender, except in the third person singular, *he, she*, or *it*. We do, however, often *personify* things. Speaking of a nation we

often say *she*; of the sun, we say *he*; of the moon, we say *she*. We may personify things at our pleasure; but, we must take care to be consistent, and not call a thing *he*, or *she*, in one part of a sentence, and *it* in another part. The occasions when you ought to personify things and when you ought not, cannot be stated in any precise rule. Your own taste and judgment will be your best guides. I shall give you my opinion about figures of speech in a future Letter.

150. Nouns which denote sorts, or kind, of living creatures and which do not of themselves distinguish the male from the female, such as *rabbit, hare, hog, cat, pheasant, fowl*, take the neuter pronoun unless we happen to know the gender of the individual we are speaking about. If I see you with a cock pheasant in your hand, I say, "Where did you shoot *him*?" but, if you tell me you have shot a pheasant, I say, "Where did you shoot *it*?"

151. The personal pronouns in their *possessive case* must, of course, agree in number and gender with their corresponding nouns or pronouns: "John and Thomas have been so foolish as to sell *their* land; but their sister, who has too much sense to depend on a bubble for her daily bread, has kept *her* land: *theirs* is gone for ever; but *hers* is safe." So they must also in their objective case: "John and Thomas will lose the interest of their money, which will soon cease to be paid to *them*. The rents of their sister will regularly be paid to *her*; and Richard will also enjoy his income, which is to

be paid to *him* by his sister." If there be nouns of both genders used before pronouns, care must be taken, that no confusion or obscurity arise from the misuse of the pronoun. Hume says: "They declared it treason to attempt, imagine, or speak evil of the king, queen, or *his* heirs." This has, at least, a meaning, which shuts out the heirs of the queen. In such cases the noun should be *repeated*.

152. Take care, in using the personal pronouns, not to employ the *objective* case where you ought to employ the *nominative*; and take care also of the *opposite error*. "Him strikes I; Her loves he." These offend the ear at once. But, when a number of words come in between the discordant parts, the ear does not detect the error. "It was some of those, who came hither last night, and went away this morning, who did the mischief, and not my brother and *me*." It ought to be "my brother and *I*." For, I am not, in the instance, the *object*, but the actor, or supposed actor. "Who broke that glass? It was *me*." It ought to be *I*; that is to say, it was *I* who broke it." Fill up the sentence with all the words that are understood; and if there be errors you will soon discover them. After the words *than* and *as*, this error, of putting the objective for the nominative, is very frequently committed: as, "John was very rich, but Peter was richer than *him*, and, at the same time, as learned as *him* or any of his family." It ought to be richer than *he*; as learned as *he*; for, the full meaning here, is, "richer than *he was*; as learned as *he*

was." But it does not always happen that the nominative case comes after *than* or *as*. "I love you more than *him*: I give you more than *him*: I love you as well as *him*." That is to say, I love you more than *I love him*; I give you more than *I give him*; I love you as well as *I love him*." Take away *him* and put *he*, in all these cases, and the grammar is just as good, only the meaning is quite different. "I love you as well as *him*," means, that I love you as well as I love *him*: but, "I love you as well as *he*," means that I love you as well as *he loves you*.

153. You see, then, of what importance this distinction of *cases* is. But, you must not look for *this word*, or *that word*, coming before or coming after, to be your guide. It is reason which is to be your sole guide. When the person or thing represented by the pronoun is the object, then it must be in the objective case: when it is the actor, or when it is merely the person or thing said to be this or that, then it must be in the nominative case. Read again paragraphs 40, 41, and 42 of Letter V.

154. The errors, committed with regard to the confounding of cases, arise most frequently, when the pronouns are placed, in the sentences, at a great distance from the words which are connected with them, and which determine the case. "He and his sister, and not their uncle and cousins, the estate was given *to*." You might easily write this; but, bring the pronoun close to the preposition that demands the objective case: say, the estate was given *to*

he; and then you perceive the grossness of the error in a moment. "The work of national ruin was pretty effectually carried on *by* the ministers; but more effectually by the paper-money makers than *they*." This does not hurt the ear; but, it ought to be *them*: "more effectually than *by them*."

155. The pronouns *mine, thine, theirs, yours, hers, his*, stand frequently by themselves; that is to say, not followed by any noun. But, then, the pronoun is understood. "This is *hers*." That is to say, her property; her *hat*, or whatever else. No difficulty can arise in the use of these words.

156. But, the use of the personal pronoun *it* is a subject of considerable importance. Read again paragraphs 53 and 54, Letter VI. Think well upon what you find there; and, when you have done that, proceed with me. This pronoun, with the verb *to be*, is in constant use in our language. To say, "Your uncle *came* hither last night," is not the same thing as to say, "It was your uncle *who came* hither last night," though the fact related be the same. "*It is I* who write," is very different from "I write." "It *is those men*, who deserve well of their country," means a great deal more than, "*Those men* deserve well of their country." The principal verbs are the same: the prepositions are the same; but the real meaning is different.

157. This *it*, with its verb *to be*, is sometimes employed with the preposition *for*, with singular force and effect. "*It is for* the guilty to live

in fear, to skulk and to hang their heads; but *for* the innocent *it is* to enjoy ease and tranquillity of mind, to scorn all disguise, and to carry themselves erect." This is much more forcible than to say: "The guilty generally live in fear," and so on, throughout the sentence. The word *for*, in this case, denotes appropriateness, or fitness; and the full expression would be this: "To the *state* of *being*, or *state* of *things*, called guiltiness, to live in fear *is fitting*, or *is appropriate*." If you pay attention to the reason, on which the use of these words is founded, you will never be at a loss to use them properly.

158. The word *it* is the greatest troubler that I know of in language. It is so small, and so convenient, that few are careful enough in using it. Writers seldom spare this word. Whenever they are at a loss for either a nominative or an objective to their sentence they, without any kind of ceremony, clap in an *it*. Never put an *it* upon paper without thinking well of what you are about. When I see many *its* in a page, I always tremble for the writer.

159. We now come to the second class of pronouns · that is to say, the RELATIVE PRONOUNS, of which you have had some account in Letter VI, paragraphs 55, 56, 57, and 58; which paragraphs you should now read over again with attention.

160. *Who*, which becomes *whose* in the possessive case, and *whom* in the objective case is, in its use, confined to human beings; for though some writers do say: "the country

whose fertility is great," and the like, it is not correct. We must say: "the country, the fertility *of which*." But, if, for instance, we call a nation a *she*, or the sun a *he*, we must then, if we have need of the relative pronouns, take these, or the word *that*, which is a relative applicable to beings inanimate or otherwise.

161. The errors which are most frequent, in the use of these relative pronouns, arise from not taking care to use *who* and *whom* when they are respectively demanded by the verbs or prepositions. "To *who* did you speak?" "*Whom* is come to-day?" These sentences are too glaringly wrong to pass from our pens to the paper. But, as in the case of personal pronouns, when the relatives are placed, in the sentence, at a distance from their antecedents, or verbs, or prepositions, the ear gives us no assistance. "*Who*, of all the men in the world, do you think I saw, the other day." "*Who*, for the sake of his numerous services, the office was given to." In both these cases it ought to be *whom*. Bring the verb, in the first, and the preposition in the second, case closer to the relative; as, *who I saw*; *to who the office was given*; and, you see the error at once. But, take care! "*Whom* of all men in the world, do you think was chosen to be sent as an ambassador? *Whom* for the sake of his numerous services had an office of honour bestowed upon him." These are nominative cases and ought to have *who*: that is to say, "*who* was chosen; *who* had an office." I will not load you with numerous examples. Read

again about the nominative and objective cases in Letter V. Apply your reason to the subject. *Who* is the nominative, and *whom* the objective. Think well about the matter, and you will want no more examples.

162. There is, however, an erroneous way of employing *whom* which I must point out to your particular attention, because it is so often seen in the works of very good writers, and because it is very deceiving. "The Duke of Argyle, *than whom* no man was more hearty in the cause." "Cromwell, *than whom* no man was better skilled in artifice." A hundred such phrases might be collected from the best authors, yet they are bad grammar. In all such cases, *who* should be made use of; for, it is nominative and not objective.

163. *That*, as a relative, may, as we have seen, be applied either to persons or things; but it has no possessive case, and no change to denote the other two cases. We say: "The man *that* gives, and the man *that* a thing is given *to*." But, there are some instances, when it can hardly be called proper to use *that* instead of *who*, or *whom*. Thus, directly after a proper name, as in Hume: "The Queen gave orders for taking into custody the Duke of Northumberland, who fell on his knees to the Earl of Arundel, *that* arrested him." *Who* would have been much better, though there was a *who* just before in the sentence. *That*, as a relative, cannot take the preposition or verb immediately before it: as, "the man *to whom* I gave a book;" but I cannot say, "the man *to*

that I gave a book ; " nor " the knife *to that* I put a handle." " Having defeated *whom*, he remained quiet " ; but, we cannot, in speaking of persons, say, " having defeated *that*, he remained quiet."

164. *Which*, as a relative pronoun, is applied to irrational beings only, and, to those beings, it may be employed indifferently with *that*, except in the cases where the relative comes directly after a *verb* or a *preposition*, in the manner just spoken of. We say, " the town, the horse, the tree, *which* ; or *to which* ; " and so on. And we say, " the town, the tree, the horse, *that* ; " but not *to* or *for that*.

165. We may, in speaking of nouns of multitude, when the multitude consists of rational creatures, and when it is a *singular* noun, make use of *who* or *whom*, or of *which*, just as we please. We may say, " the *crowd*, which was going up the street " ; or, " the *crowd*, *who* was going up the street " ; but we cannot make use of both in the same sentence and relating to the same noun. Therefore, we cannot say, " the crowd *who* was going up the street and *which* was making a great noise." We must take the *who*, or the *which*, in both places. If such a noun of multitude be used in the *plural number*, we then go on with the idea of the rationality of the individuals in our minds ; and, therefore, we make use of *who* and *whom*. " The assembly, *who* rejected the petition, but, to *whom* another was immediately presented."

166. *Who*, *whose*, *whom*, and *which*, are

employed in asking questions ; to which, in this capacity, we must add *what*. "*Who* is in the house ?" "*Whose* gun is that ?" *Whom* do you love best ?" "*What* has happened to-day ?" *What* means generally, as a relative, "*the thing which*" : as, "Give me *what* I want." It may be used in the nominative and in the objective case : "What happens to-day, may happen next week ; but I know not *to what* we shall come at last" : or, "*The thing which* happens to-day, may happen next week ; but I know not *the thing* which we shall come to at last."

167. *Which* though, in other cases, it cannot be employed as a relative with nouns which are the names of rational beings, is, with such nouns, employed in asking questions : as, "The tyrants allege that the petition was disrespectful. *Which* of the tyrants ?" Again : "One of the petitioners had his head cleaved by the yeomanry." "*Which ?*" That is to say, "Which of the petitioners was it ?"

168. *What*, when used in asking for a repetition of what has been said : as, "*What ?*" means, "Tell me *that which*, or the *thing which*, you have said." This word is used, and with great force, in the way of exclamation. "What ! rob us of our right of suffrage, and then, when we pray to have our right restored to us, shut us up in dungeons !" The full meaning is this : "*What do they do ?* They rob us of our right."

169. It is not, in general, advisable to crowd these relatives together ; but it sometimes happens that it is done. "*Who, that* has any

sense, can believe such palpable falsehoods? *What, that* can be invented, can disguise these falsehoods? *By whom, that* you ever heard of, was a pardon obtained from the mercy of a tyrant? Some men's rights have been taken from them by force and by genius, but *whose, that* the world ever heard of before, were taken away by ignorance and stupidity?"

170. *Whosoever, whomsoever, whatsoever, whichsoever,* follow the rules applicable to the original words. The *so* is an adverb, which, in its general acceptation, means *in like manner*; and *ever,* which is also an adverb, means at *any time,* at *all times,* or *always.* These two words thus joined in *whosoever,* mean *who, in any case that may be*; and so of the other three words. We sometimes omit the *so,* and say *whoever, whomever,* and *whatever.* It is a mere abbreviation. The *so* is understood. Sometimes the *soever* is separated from the pronoun: "*What* man *soever* he might be." But, the main thing is, to understand the reason upon which the use of these words stands; for, if you understand that, you will always use the words properly.

171. The DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS have been described in Letter VI, paragraph 59; and I have very little to add to what is there said upon the subject. They never change their endings, to denote gender or case; and the proper application of them is so obvious, that it requires little to be said about it. However, we shall hear more of these pronouns, when we come to the syntax of *verbs.* One

observation I will make here, however, because it will serve to caution you against the commission of a very common error. You will hardly say, "*Them* that write"; but you may say, as many do, "We ought always to have a great regard for them, who are wise and good"; it ought to be, "*for those* who are wise and good," because the word *persons* is understood; "*those persons*, who are wise and good"; and it is bad grammar to say, "*them persons*, who are wise and good." But, observe, in *another sense*, this sentence would be correct. If I am speaking of *particular persons*, and if my object be to make you understand that they are *wise and good*, and also, that I *love them*; then, I say very correctly, "I love *them*, who are wise and good." Thus: "The father has two children; he loves *them*, who are wise and good; and they love him, who is very indulgent." It is the *meaning* that must be your guide; and reason must tell you what is the meaning. "*They*, who can write, save a great deal of bodily labour," is very different from, "*Those*, who can write, save a great deal of bodily labour." The *those* stands for *those persons*; that is to say *any persons, persons in general*, who can write; whereas, the *they*, as here used, relates to some particular person and the sentence means, that these particular persons are *able to write*, and, by that means, *they* save a great deal of bodily labour.

172. THE INDETERMINATE OR IMPERSONAL PRONOUNS have been enumerated in Letter VI, paragraph 62. They are sometimes *adjectives*, as is stated in that paragraph.

Whoever, *whatever*, and *whichever* (that is, *whosoever*, *whatsoever*, *whichsoever*), though *relatives*, are indeterminate too. But, indeed, it signifies little how these words are *classed*. It is the use of them that we ought to look to. *Every*, which I have reckoned amongst these pronouns, is never, now-a-days, used *without a noun*, and is, therefore, in fact, an *adjective*. The error that is most frequently committed in using these pronouns is, the putting of the *plural* verb, or plural pronoun, after nouns preceded by *every*, *each*, or *either*; especially in the case of *every*; as, *every* man, *every* body, *every* house. These are understood to mean, all the *men*, all the *people*, all the *houses*; but, only *one man*, *one body*, *one house*, is spoken of, and, therefore, the verb ought to be in the singular; as, "Everybody *is* disgusted"; and not "Everyone *are* disgusted."

173. The pronoun *either*, which means one of two, is very often improperly employed. It is used to denote one of *three or more*, which is always incorrect. We say, "*either* the dog *or* the cat"; but not, *either* the *dog*, the *cat*, or the *pig*." Suppose someone were to ask me, which I choose to have, mutton, veal, or woodcock, I answer, *any one* of them; and not, *either* of them.

LETTER XVIII.

SYNTAX, AS RELATING TO ADJECTIVES.

174. By this time, my dear James, you will hardly want to be reminded of the nature of

Adjectives. However, it may not be amiss for you to read again attentively the whole of Letter VII.

175. Adjectives, having no relative effect, containing no representative quality, have not the dangerous power, possessed by pronouns, of throwing whole sentences into confusion, and of perverting or totally destroying the writer's meaning. For this reason, there is little to be said respecting the using of adjectives.

176. When adjectives are used as *nouns*, they must, in all respects, be treated as nouns. "The guilty, the innocent, the rich, the poor, are mixed together." But, we cannot say, "*a* guilty," meaning to use the word *guilty* as a noun.

177. If two or more Adjectives be used as applicable to the same noun, there must be a comma, or commas, to separate them; as, "a poor, unfortunate man"; unless *and* or *or* be made use of, for then a comma, or commas, may be omitted; as, "a lofty and large and excellent house."

178. Be rather sparing than liberal in the use of adjectives. One, which expresses your meaning, is better than two, which can, at best, do no more than express it, while the additional one may, possibly, do harm. But, the error most common in the use of adjectives, is the endeavouring to strengthen the Adjective by putting an adverb before it, which adverb conveys the notion, that the quality of property expressed by the adjective admits of degrees; as, "*very* honest, *extremely* just." A man may

be *wiser* than another wise man, an act may be *more wicked* than another wicked act; but, a man cannot be *more honest* than another; every man, who is not honest, must be dishonest; and every act, which is not just, must be unjust. "*Very* right," and "*very* wrong," are very common expressions, but they are both incorrect. Some expressions may be more common than others; but, that which is not right is wrong; and that which is not wrong is right. There are here no intermediate degrees. We should laugh to hear a man say: "You are a *little* right; I am a *good deal* wrong; that person is honest in a *trifling degree*; that act was *too* just." But our ears are accustomed to the abverbs of exaggeration. Some writers deal in these to a degree that tires the ear and offends the understanding. With them, everything is *excessively* or *immensely* or *extremely* or *vastly* or *surprisingly* or *wonderfully* or *abundantly*, or the like. The notion of such writers is that these words give strength to what they are saying. This is a great error. Strength must be found in the *thought*, or it will never be found in the *words*.

179. Care must be taken, too, to employ no adjectives that will not harmonise with the nouns along with which they are used. "*Good* virtues; *bad* vices; *painful* toothache; *pleasing* pleasures." These are staringly absurd.

180. To secure yourself against the risk of committing such errors, you have only to take care to ascertain the full meaning of every word you employ.

LETTER XIX.

SYNTAX, AS RELATING TO VERBS.

181. Let us, my dear James, go well through this Letter; and then, we may, I think, safely say, that we know something of Grammar. There can be no sentence, there can be no sense in words, unless there be a verb, either expressed or understood. Each of the other parts of speech may, alternately, be dispensed with; but the verb never can. The verb being, then, of so much importance, you will do well to read again, before you proceed further, paragraphs 20, 21, and 22 in Letter III, and the whole of Letter VIII.

182. Well, then, we have now to see how verbs are used in sentences, and how a misuse of them affects the meaning of the writer. There must, you will bear in mind, always be a verb, expressed or understood. One would think that this was not the case when addressing an envelope: To John Goldsmith, Esq., Hambledon, Hampshire. But what do these words really mean? Why, they mean: "This letter is to be delivered to John Goldsmith, who is an Esquire, who lives at Hambledon, which is in Hampshire." Thus, there are no less than five verbs where we thought there was no verb at all. "Sir, I beg you to give me a bit of bread." The sentence, which follows the *Sir*, is complete; but the *Sir* appears to stand wholly without connection. However, the full meaning is this, "I beg you, who are a Sir, to give me a bit of bread." "What, John?" That is to say, "What *is* said by you, whose name is John?"

Again, in the date of a letter: "Fleet Street, 25 March, 1923." That is: "I am now writing in Fleet Street; this is the twenty-fifth day of March, and this month is in the one thousand nine hundred and twenty-third year of the Christian era."

183. Now, if you take time to reflect a little on this matter, you will never be puzzled for a moment by those detached words, to suit which grammarians have invented *vocative cases* and *cases absolute*, and a great many other appellations, with which they puzzle themselves and confuse and bewilder and torment those who read their books. We almost always, whether in speaking or in writing, leave out some of the words which are necessary to a full expression of our meaning. This leaving out is called the *Ellipsis*. *Ellipsis* is, in geometry, an oval figure; and, the compasses, in the tracing of the line of this figure, do not take their full sweep all round, as in the tracing of a circle, but they make skips and leave out parts of the area or surface, which parts would be included in the circle. Hence it is that the skipping over or leaving out in speaking or in writing is called the *Ellipsis*; without making the use of which we, as you will presently see, scarcely ever open our lips or move our pens. "He told me, that he had given John the gun, which the gunsmith brought the other night." That is: "He told *to* me, that he had given *to* John the gun, which the gunsmith brought *to* this place, *on* the other night." This would, you see, be very cumbrous and disagreeable; and, therefore, seeing that

the meaning is quite clear without the words, marked by italics, we leave these words out. But, we may easily go too far in this elliptical way, and say: "He told me, he had given John the gun, the gunsmith brought the other night." This is leaving the sentence too bare, and making it, if not nonsense, hardly sense.

184. Reserving some further remarks, to be made by-and-by, on the Ellipsis, I have now to desire that, always, when you are examining a sentence, you will take into your view the words that are left out. If you have any doubt as to the correctness of the sentence, fill it up by putting in the left-out words, and, if there be an error, you will soon discover it.

185. Keeping in mind these remarks on the subject of *understood words*, you will now listen attentively to me while I endeavour to explain to you the manner in which verbs ought to be used in sentences.

186. The first thing is to come to a clear understanding with regard to the *cases* of nouns and pronouns as connected, in use, with verbs and prepositions; for, on this connection, depends a great deal. Verbs *govern*, as it is called, nouns and pronouns; that is to say, they sometimes cause, or make, nouns or pronouns to be in a certain case. *Nouns* do not vary their endings to denote different cases but *pronouns* do; as you have seen in Letter VI. Therefore, to illustrate this matter, I will take the personal pronoun of the third person singular, which in the nominative case, is, *he*, possessive case, *his*, objective case, *him*.

187. When a *man* (it is the same with regard to any other person or thing) is the *actor*, or *doer*, the man is in the nominative case, and the corresponding pronoun is *he*: "*He* strikes." The same case exists when the man is the *receiver* or *endurer*, of an action. "*He is* stricken." It is still the same case when the man is said *to be* in any state or condition. "He is unhappy." Indeed, there is no difference in these two latter instances; for, "*he is* stricken," is no other than to say that "he *is* in a state, or condition, called *stricken*." Observe, too, that in these two latter instances, the *he* is followed by the verb *to be*; he *is* stricken, he *is* unhappy; and observe, moreover, that whenever the verb *to be* is used, the *receiver*, or *be-er*, (if I may make a word) is, and must be, in the *nominative case*. But, now, let me stop a little to guard you against a puzzle. I say, "the verb *to be*"; but I do not mean those two words always. When I say, "the verb *to be*"; I may mean, as in the above examples, *is*. This is the verb to *be*, in the third person singular. "I *write*." I should say, that here is the pronoun *I* and the verb *to write*; that is to say, it is the verb *to write* in one of its forms. The *to* is the sign of the infinitive mood; and the verb in that state, is the root, or the foundation, from which all the different parts and forms proceed. Having guarded ourselves against this puzzler, let us come back to our nominative case. The *actor*, the *doer*, the *receiver of an action*, the *be-er*, must always be in the nominative case; and, it is called nominative case, because it is that

state, or situation, or case, in which the person, or thing, is *named* without being pointed out as the *object*, or *end*, of any foregoing action or purpose; as "*he* strikes; *he* is stricken; *he* is happy." This word *nominative* is not a good word; *acting and being* case would be much better. This word, nominative, like most of the terms used in teaching grammar, has been taken from the Latin. It is bad; it is inadequate for its intended purpose; but, it is *used*; and, if we understand its meaning, or rather, what it is designed to mean, its intrinsic insufficiency is of no consequence. Thus, I hope, then, that we know what the *nominative* is. "He writes; he sings; he is sick; he is well; he is smitten; he is good"; and so on, always with a *he*.

188. But (and now pay attention) if the *action pass* from the *actor* to *a person* or *thing* acted upon, and, if there be no part of the verb, *to be* employed; then the person or thing acted upon is in the *objective case*; as, "he smites *him*; he strikes *him*; he kills *him*." In these instances we wish to show you, not only an action that is performed and the person who performs it, but also the person upon whom it is performed. Here, therefore, we state the actor, the action, and the object; and, the person or thing which is the object, is in the *objective case*. The verb is said, in such instances, to *govern* the noun or pronoun; that is to say, to make it or force it to be in the objective case; and to make us use *him* instead of *he*.

189. However, I remember, that I was very much puzzled on account of these cases. I

saw, that when "Peter was *smitten*," Peter was in the *nominative case*; but that, when any person or thing "had *smitten* Peter," *Peter* was in the *objective case*. This puzzled me much; and the loose and imperfect definitions of my grammar-book yielded me no clue to a disentanglement. Reflection on the reason for this apparent inconsistency soon taught me, however, that, in the first of these cases, Peter is merely *named*, or nominated, as the receiver of an action: and that, in the latter instance, Peter is mentioned as the object of the action of some other person or thing, expressed or understood. I perceived, that, in the first instance, "Peter is *smitten*," I had a complete sense. I was informed as to the person who had received an action, and also as to what sort of action he had received. And, I perceived that, in the second instance, "John *has smitten Peter*," there was an actor who took possession of the use of the verb, and made Peter the object of it; and that this actor, John, now took to the nominative, and put Peter in the objective case.

190. This puzzle was, however, hardly got over, when another presented itself; for, I conceived the notion, that Peter was in the nominative only because no actor was mentioned at all in the sentence; but, I soon discovered this to be an error; for, I found that, "Peter is smitten *by John*," still left Peter in the nominative; and that, if I used the pronoun, I must say, "*he* is smitten by John"; and not "*him* is smitten by John."

191. Upon this puzzle I dwelt a long time; a whole week, at least, for I was not content unless I could reconcile everything to reason; and, I could see no reason for this. Peter, in this last instance, appeared to be the *object*, and there was the *actor*, John. My ear, indeed, assured me that it was right to say, "*he* is smitten by John"; but my reason doubted the information and assurances of my ear.

192. At last, the little insignificant word, *by*, attracted my attention. This word, in this place, is a preposition. Ah! that is it! Prepositions *govern* nouns and pronouns; that is to say, *make them to be in the objective case*! So that, John, who had plagued me so much, I found to be in the objective case, and I found that, if I put him out, and put the pronoun in his place, I must say, "Peter is smitten *by him*."

193. Now, then, my dear James, do you clearly understand this? If you do not, have patience. Read and think, and weigh well every part of what I have here written; for, as you will immediately see, a clear understanding with regard to the cases is one of the main inlets to a perfect knowledge of grammar.

194. Verbs, of which there must be one at least, expressed or understood, in every sentence, must agree in *person* and in *number* with the nouns or pronouns, which are the nominatives of the sentence; that is to say, the verbs must be of the same person and same number as the nominatives are. Verbs frequently change their forms and endings to make themselves *agree* with their *nominatives*. How necessary is

it, then, to know what is, and what is not, a nominative in a sentence! Let us take an example. "John smite Peter." What are those words? John is a noun, *third person*, singular number, nominative case. *Smite* is a verb, *first person*, singular number. *Peter* is a noun, third person, singular number, objective case. Therefore the sentence is incorrect; for the *nominative, John*, is in the *third* person, and the verb is in the *first*; while both ought to be in the *same person*. The sentence ought to be, "John *smites* Peter"; and not "John *smite* Peter."

195. This is, to be sure, a very glaring error; but still it is no more than an error, and is, in fact, as excusable as any other grammatical error. "The men lives in the country." Here, the verb, *lives*, is in the *singular* number, and the noun, *men*, which is the nominative, is in the *plural* number. "The men *live* in the country," it ought to be. These errors stare us in the face. But, when the sentences become longer, and embrace several nominatives and verbs, we do not so readily perceive the errors that are committed.

196. Look, therefore, at your *nominative*, before you put a verb upon paper; for, you see, it may be one word, or two, or more words. But, observe, if there be two or more singular nouns or pronouns, separated by *or*, which you know, is a disjoining conjunction; then, the verb must be in the singular; as, "A soldier, *or* a sailor, who has served his country faithfully, *is* fairly entitled to a pension."

197. When nominatives are separated by

nor, the rule of *or* must be followed. "*Neither* man *nor* beast *is* safe in such weather," and not *are* safe. And, if nominations of different numbers present themselves, we must not give them a verb which disagrees with either the one or the other. We must not say: "*Neither* the halter *nor* the bayonets *are* sufficient to prevent us from obtaining our rights." We must avoid this bad grammar by using a different form of words; as, "We are to be prevented from obtaining our rights by neither the halter nor the bayonets." And, why should we wish to write bad grammar, if we can express our meaning in good grammar?

198. If *or* and *nor* disjoin nouns and pronouns of different persons, these nouns and pronouns, though they be all of the same number, cannot be the nominative of one and the same verb. We cannot say, "They or I *am* in fault; I, or they, or he, *is* the author of it; George or I *am* the person." Mr. Lindley Murray says that we *may* use these phrases and that we have only to take care that the verb agrees with that person which is *placed nearest* to it; but, he says also, that it would be better to avoid such phrases by giving a different turn to our words. I do not like to leave anything to chance or discretion, when we have a clear principle for our guide. Fill up the sentences, and you will see what pretty work is here. "They *am* in fault, or I *am* in fault; I *is* the author, or they *is* the author; or he *is* the author. George *am* the person, or I *am* the person."

199. The nominative is frequently a noun of

multitude; as *mob, parliament, gang.* Now, where this is the case, the verb is used in the singular or in the plural, upon precisely the same principles, that the pronouns are so used; and, as these principles, together with ample illustrations in the way of example, have been given you in Letter XVII, paragraph 148, I need say nothing more of the matter.

200. In looking for the nominative of a sentence, take care that the *relative pronoun* be not a stumbling block, for relatives have no changes to denote number or person; and, though they may sometimes appear to be, of themselves, nominatives, they never can be such. "The men *who are* here, the man *who is* here; the cocks *that* crow, the cock *that* crows." Now, if the relative be the nominative, why do the verbs *change*, seeing that here is no *change in the relative*? No: the verb, in pursuit of its nominative, runs through the relatives to come at their antecedents, *men, man, cocks, cock.* "*Who* is in this house? *Who are* in this house?" "*Who strikes* the iron? *Who strike* the iron?" "*Who was* in the street? *Who were* in the street?" Now, here is, in all these instances, no other nominative between the relative and the verb; and yet the verb is continually varying. Why does it vary? Because it disregards the relative, and goes and finds the antecedent, and accommodates its number to that antecedent. The antecedents are, in these instances, understood: "What *person* is in the house? *What persons are* in the house?" "What *person strikes* the iron? What *persons*

strike the iron ?" "What *person was* in the street ? What *persons were* in the street ?"

201. We are sometimes embarrassed to fix precisely on the nominative when a sort of *addition* is made to it by words expressing persons or things that accompany it ; as, "The Tyrant, with the Spy, *have* brought Peter to the block." We hesitate to determine whether the *Tyrant* alone is the nominative, or whether the nominative includes the Spy ; and, of course, we hesitate which to employ, the *singular* or the *plural* verb ; that is to say, *has* or *have*. The meaning must be our guide. If we mean that the act has been done by the Tyrant himself, and that the Spy has been a mere involuntary agent, then we ought to use the singular ; but if we believe that the Spy has been a co-operator, an associate, an accomplice, then we must use the plural of the verb. "The Tyrant, with his Proclamation, has produced great oppression and flagrant violations of law." *Has*, by all means, in this case ; because the Letter is a mere instrument. Give the sentence a turn : "The Tyrant has produced great oppresssion and flagrant violations of the law with his Proclamation." This is good ; but, the Tyrant "*has* brought Peter to the block *with* the Spy," is bad. It sounds badly and it is bad sense. It does not say what we mean it should say. "A leg of mutton, with turnips and carrots, *is* very good." If we mean to say that a leg of mutton when cooked with these vegetables is good, we must use *is* ; but if we are speaking of the goodness of a leg of mutton and these

vegetables taken all together, we must use *are*. When *with* means *along with, together with, in company with*, and the like, it is nearly the same as *and*; and then the plural verb must be used. "*He*, with his bare hand, *takes* up hot iron." Not, "He, with his bare hand, *take* up." "*He* with his brothers, *are* able to do much." Not, "*is* able to do much." If the pronoun be used instead of *brothers*, it will be in the objective case; "He, with *them*, are able to do much." But, this is no impediment to the including of the noun (represented by *them*) in the nominative. *With*, which is a preposition, takes the objective case after it; but, if the persons, or things, represented by the words coming after the preposition, form part of the actors in a sentence, the understood nouns make part of the nominatives. "The bag, with the guineas and dollars in it, were stolen." For, if we say, *was stolen*, it is possible for us to mean, that the bag only was stolen. "Sobriety, with great industry and talent, enable a man to perform great deeds." And not *enables*: for, sobriety alone would not enable a man to do great things.

202. The verb *to be* sometimes comes between two nouns of different number. "The great evil *is* the borough-debt." In this instance there is nothing to embarrass us; because *evil* and *borough-debt* are both in the singular. But: "The great evil *is* the taxes," is not clear of embarrassment. The embarrassment is the same when there is a singular noun on one side and two or more singulars or plurals on the

other side; as, "The curse of the country is the profligacy, the rapacity, the corruption of the law-makers, the base subserviency of the administrators of the law, and the frauds of the makers of paper-money." Now, we mean, here, that these things *constitute*, or *form*, or *make up*, a curse. We mean, that the curse consists of these things; and if we said this, there would be no puzzling. "The evil *is* the taxes." That is, the taxes constitute the evil; but, we cannot say, "The evil *are* the taxes"; nor can we say, that "The curse *are* these things." Avoid, then, the use of the verb *to be*, in all such cases. Say, the curse of the country consists of, or arises *from*, or is produced *by*.

203. You must take care, that there *be* a nominative, and that it be clearly expressed or understood. The omitting of the nominative arises very often from a desire to avoid a repetition of the noun or pronoun; but, repetition is always to be preferred before obscurity.

204. Now, my dear James, I hope that I have explained to you sufficiently, not only what the nominative is, but what are its powers in every sentence; and that I have imprinted deeply on your mind the necessity for keeping the nominative constantly in your eye. For want of doing this, Judge Blackstone has, in Book IV, Chap. 17, committed some ludicrous errors. "Our ancient Saxon *laws* nominally punished theft with death, if above the value of twelve pence; but the criminal was permitted to redeem *his* life by a pecuniary ransom; as among *their* German *ancestors*." What confu-

fusion! Whose ancestors? *Theirs.* Who are *they*? Why the *criminal. Theirs*, if it relate to anything, must relate to *laws*; and then the *laws* have *ancestors*. Then, what is it that was to be above the value of twelve pence? The *death* or the *theft*? By, "*if above the* value of twelve pence," the Judge, without doubt, meant, "*if the thing stolen* were above the value of twelve pence"; but he says no such thing; and the meaning of the words is, if *the* death were above the value of twelve pence. The sentence should have stood thus: "Our ancient Saxon laws nominally punished theft with death, if the thing stolen were above the value of twelve pence; but the criminals were permitted to redeem their lives by a pecuniary ransom; as among their German ancestors."

205. As to the *objective case* it has nothing to do with verbs; because, a noun which is not in the nominative must be in the objective; and because verbs do never vary their endings to make themselves *agree* with the objective. This case has been sufficiently explained under the head of *personal pronouns*, which have endings to denote it.

206. The *possessive case*, likewise, has nothing to do with verbs; only, you must take care that you do not, in any instance, look upon it as a nominative. "The quality of the apples *were* good." No: it must be *was*: for quality is the nominative and *apples* the possessive. "The want of learning, talent, and sense, *are* more visible in the slums than in any other part of the country." Take care upon all such occasions. Such sentences are, as to grammati-

cal construction, very deceiving. It should be "*is* more visible"; for *want* is the nominative; and *learning*, *talent*, and *sense*, are in the possessive. The want of *learning*, and so on.

207. You now know all about the *person* and *number* of verbs. You know the reasons upon which are founded their variations with regard to these two circumstances. Look, now, at the *conjugation* in Letter VIII, paragraph 89; and you will see that there remain the *Tenses* and *Moods* to be considered.

208. Of Tense there is very little to be said here. All the fanciful distinctions of *perfect*, *present*, and *past*, and numerous others only tend to bewilder and confuse the learner. There can be but three main tenses, the *present*, the *past* and the *future*; and, for the expressing of these, our language provides us with words and terminations the most suitable that can possibly be conceived. In some languages, which contain no little words such as our auxiliaries, *will*, *shall*, *may*, and so on, the verbs themselves change their form in order to express what we express by the help of these signs. There are two past tenses in French, for instance. I will give you an example in order to explain this matter. "The working men every day *gave* money to the tyrants, who, in return, *gave* the working men dungeons and axes." Now here is our word *gave*, which is the past tense of the verb *to give*. It is the same word, you see, in both instances; but you will see it is different in French. "Tous les jours les ouvriers donnaient de l'argent aux tyrans, qui,

en retour, donnèrent aux ouvrièrs des cachots et des haches." You see, that, in one place, our *give* is translated by *donnaient*, and, in the other, by *donnèrent*. One of these is called in French, the *past imperfect*, and the other, the *past perfect*. This distinction is necessary in the French; but similar distinctions are wholly unnecessary in English.

209. There are, however, some few remarks to be made with regard to the tenses of verbs; but, before I make them, I must speak of the *participles*. Just cast your eye again on Letter VIII, paragraphs 88 and 90. Look also at the conjugations of the verbs, *to work*, *to have*, and *to be*, in that same letter. These *participles*, you see, with the help of *to have* and *to be*, form our *compound tenses*. I need not tell you, that *I was working*, means the same as *I worked*, only that the former supposes that something else was going on at the same time, or that something happened at the time *I was working*, or that, at least, there is some circumstance of action or of existence collateral with *my working*; as, "I was working *when he came*; *I was sick* while I was *working*; *it rained* while I was working; *she scolded* while I was working." I need not tell you the use of *do* and *did*; I need not say, that I *do work* is the same as *I work*, only the former expresses the action more positively, and adds some degree of force to the assertion; and that *did work* is the same as *worked*, only the former is, in the past tense, of the same use as *do* in the present. I need not dwell here on the uses of *will*, *shall*, *may*, *might*,

should, would, can, could, and *must*; which uses, various as they are, are as well known to us all as the uses of our teeth and our noses; and to misapply these words argues, not only a deficiency in instinctive reasoning faculties, but almost a deficiency in instinctive discrimination. Of all these little words I have said quite enough before; but, when the verbs *to have* and *to be* are used as auxiliaries to principal verbs, and, especially when the sentences are long, errors of great consequence may be committed; and, therefore, against these it will be proper to guard you.

210. The most common error regarding Tense is the use of the verb *to have* with the past participle, when the past tense, simply, of the verb ought to be used. "Mr. Speaker, I *expected*, from the former language, and positive promises, of the Noble Lord and the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to *have seen* the Bank paying in gold and silver." I expected *to see*, to be sure, and not *have seen*, because the *have seen* carries your act of *seeing* back beyond the period within which it is supposed to have been expected to take place. "*I expected to have* ploughed my land last Monday"; that is to say, "I *last Monday* was in the act of *expecting to have* ploughed my land before that day." But, this is not what the writer means. He means to say, that, last Monday, or before that day, he was in the act of expecting *to plough* his land on that day. "I called on him and *wished* to have submitted my manuscript to him"; "I wished, *then*, and *there to summit* my manuscript to him." I

wished *to do* something *there*, and did not *then* wish that I had done something before.

211. When you use the *present* participle, take care that the *tenses* be attended to, and that you do not, by misapplication, make confusion and nonsense. "I had not the pleasure of *hearing* his sentiments when I wrote that letter." It should be *of having heard*; because the hearing must be supposed to have been wanted previous to the act of writing. This word *wanted*, and the word *wanting*, are frequently misused. "All that was *wanting* was honesty." It should be *wanted*. "The Bank is weighed in the balance and found *wanting*," and not *wanted*. Found *to be wanting*, or *in want, in want of* money to pay its notes.

212. I will not fatigue your memory with more examples relating to the tenses of verbs. Consider well what you mean, what you wish to say. Examine well into the true meaning of your words; and you will never make a mistake as to the tenses. "I *thought to have heard* the Noble Lord produce something like proof." No! My dear James will never fall into the use of such mistakes! You would think of hearing something; you would think of *to* hear, not *to have heard*. You would be *waiting to hear*, and not, like these men, be waiting *to have heard*.

213. It is erroneous to confound the *past tense* with the *past participle* of the verb. But, now, before I speak of this very common error, let us see a little more about the participles. You have seen, in Letter VIII, what the participles are; you have seen, that *working* is

the present participle, and *worked* the past participle. We shall speak fully of the present by-and-by. The past participle and the verb *to be*, or some part of that verb, make what is called the *passive verb*. This is not a verb, which in its origin, differs from an active verb, in like manner as an *intransitive verb* differs from an active verb. *To sleep* is intransitive in its origin, and must, in all its parts, be intransitive; but every active verb may become a passive verb. The passive verb is, in fact, that state of an active verb which expresses, as we have seen above, the action as being *received*, or *endured*; and, it is called *passive*, because, the receiver or endurer of the action is *passive*; that is to say, does nothing. "John *smites*; John is *smitten*." Thus, then, the passive verb is no other than the past participle, used along with some part of the verb *to be*.

214. Now, then, let us see a specimen of the errors, of which I spoke at the beginning of the last paragraph. When the verb is *regular*, there can be no error of this sort: because the past *tense* and the past participle are written in the same manner: as, "John *worked*; John is *worked*." But, when the verb is *irregular*, and when the past tense and the past participle are written in a manner different from each other, there is room for error, and error is often committed: "John *smote*; John is *smote*." This is gross. It offends the ear. You often hear people say, and see them write, "We *have spoke*; it *was spoke* in my hearing"; but, "We *have came*: *was did*," are just as correct.

215. *Done* is the past participle of *to do*, and

it is very often misused. This *done* is frequently a very great offender against Grammar. *To do* is the act of *doing*. We often see people write: "I *did* not speak yesterday, so well as I wished to have *done*." Now, what is meant by the writer? He means to say, that he did not speak so well as he then *wished*, or was wishing, to *speak*. Therefore, the sentence should be: "I did not speak yesterday so well as I wished *to do*." That is to say; "so well as I wished to do it"; that is to say, *to do*, or *to perform* the act of speaking.

216. Take great care not to be too free in your use of the verb *to do* in any of its tenses or moods. It is a nice little handy word, and, like our oppressed *it*, it is made use of very often, when the writer is at a loss for what to put down. *To do* is *to act*, and therefore, it never can, in any of its parts, supply the place of an intransitive verb. Yet, to employ it for this purpose is very common. Dr. Blair, in his 23rd Lecture, says: "It is somewhat unfortunate, that this number of the *Spectator* did not *end*, as it might very well have *done*, with the former beautiful period." That is to say, "*done it*." And then, we ask, done what? *Not* the act of *ending*; because, in this case, there is no *action* at all. The verb means to *come to an end*; *to cease*; not *to go any further*. This same verb, *to end*, is sometimes an active verb: "I *end* my sentence"; and then the verb *to do* may supply its place: as, "I have not ended my sentence so well as I might have *done*," that is, done *it*; that is, done or performed, the act *of ending*. But

the number of the *Spectator* was no *actor*; it was expected to *perform* nothing; it was, by the Doctor, wished to have *ceased* to proceed. "Did not *end*, as it very well might have *ended*. . . . ." This would have been correct; but the Doctor wished to avoid the *repetition*, and thus he fell into bad grammar. "Mr. Speaker, I do not *feel* so well satisfied as I should have *done*, if the Right Honourable Gentleman had explained the matter more fully." You constantly hear talk like this. To *feel* satisfied is, when the satisfaction is to arise from conviction produced by fact or reasoning, a senseless expression; and, to supply its place, when it is, as in this case, an instransitive verb, by *to do*, is as senseless. Done *what*? Done the act *of feeling*? "I *do* not *feel* so well satisfied as I should have *done*, or *executed*, or *performed*, the *act of feeling*!" What incomprehensible words!

217. But do not misunderstand me. Do not confound *do* and *did*, as parts of a principal verb, with the same words, as parts of an auxiliary. Read again Letter VIII, paragraph 97. *Do* and *did*, as helpers, are used with intransitive as well as with active verbs; for here it is not their business to supply the place of other verbs, but merely to add strength to affirmations and negations, or to mark time: as, "The sentence *does* end; I *do* feel easy." But *done*, which is the past participle of the active verb *to do*, can never be used as an auxiliary. The want of making this distinction has led to the very common error, of which I spoke in the

last paragraph, and against which I am very desirous to guard you.

218. In sentences, which are *negative*, or *interrogative*, *do* and *did* express time; as, "You *do* not sleep; *did* you not feel well?" But they do not here supply the place of other verbs; they merely help; and their assistance is useful only as to the circumstance of time; for we may say: "You *sleep* not; *felt* you not?" And if, in answer to this question, I say, "*I did*," the word *feel* is understood: "I *did feel*."

219. Well, then, I think that as far as the active verb, the passive verb, and the past participle are concerned, enough has now been said. You have seen, too, something of the difference between the functions of the active verb and those of the intransitive; but, there are a few remarks to be made with regard to the latter. An intransitive verb cannot have a noun or pronoun in the objective case after it: for though we say, "I dream a dream," it is understood that my mind has been engaged in a dream. "I live a good life," means that I am living in a good manner. "I walk my horse about," means, that I lead, or conduct, my horse in the pace called a walk. Nor can an intransitive verb become *passive*; because a passive verb is no other than a verb describing an action received, or endured. "The Noble Earl, on returning to town, found that the Noble Countess was eloped with his Grace." I read this sentence in an English newspaper not long ago. It should be *had eloped*; for *was eloped* means that *somebody* had *eloped the*

Countess; it means, that she had *received*, or *endured*, from some actor, the act of eloping, whereas she is the actress and the act is confined to herself. The verb is called intransitive because the action does not pass over to anything.

220. The danger of error, in cases of this kind, arises from the circumstances of there being many verbs which are active or transitive in one sense and intransitive in another. The verb *to endure*, for instance, when it means *to support, to sustain*, is active: as, "I endure pain." But, when it means *to last, to continue*, it is intransitive: as, "The earth endures from age to age." In the first sense we can say, the pain is endured: but, in the last, we cannot say the earth is endured from age to age. We say, indeed, "I am fallen; the colt is grown, the trees are rotten, the stone is crumbled, the post is mouldered, the pitcher is cracked"; though to grow, to rot, to crumble, to moulder, to crack, are, all of them, *intransitive verbs*; but it is clearly understood here, that we mean, that the colt is in a grown, or augmented state; that the trees are in a rotten state; and so on; and, it is equally clear that we could not mean, that the Countess was in an eloped state. "The noble Earl found that the Countess was gone." This is correct, though *to go* is an intransitive verb. But, *gone*, in this sense, is not the participle of the verb *to go*; it is merely an adjective, meaning *absent*. If we put any word after it, which gives it a verbal signification, it becomes erroneous. "He found that the Countess was

gone out of the house." That is to say, was absent out of the house; and this is nonsense. It must, in this case, be, "He found, that the Countess had gone out of the house."

221. Much more might be said upon this part of my subject; many niceties might be stated and discussed; but, I have said quite enough on it to answer every useful purpose. Here, as everywhere else, take time to think. There is a reason for the right use of every word. Have your meaning clear in your mind; know the meaning of all the words you employ; and, then, you will seldom commit errors. There remains to be noticed the use of the *present participle*, and then we shall have a few, and only a few, words to say upon the subject of the *Moods* of verbs. As to the present participle, paragraph 88, in Letter VIII, will have told you nearly all that is necessary. We know well that, *I am working*, means that *I work*, and so on. There is great nicety in distinguishing the circumstances which call for the use of the one from those which call for the use of the other; but, like many others, though very difficult to explain by words, these circumstances are perfectly well understood, and scrupulously attended to, by even the most illiterate persons. The present participle is, you know, sometimes a noun in its functions: as, "*Working* is good for our health." Here it is the nominative case to the verb *is*. Sometimes it is an adjective, as, "the *working* people." As a noun it may be in any of the three cases: as, "*Working* is

good; the advantage of *working*; I like *working*." It may be in the singular, or in the plural; "The *working* of the mines; *the workings* of corruption." Of course it requires articles and prepositions as nouns require them. More need not be said about it; and, indeed, my chief purpose in mentioning the present participle in this place is to remind you, that it may be a nominative case in a sentence.

222. The *Moods* have been explained in Letter VIII, paragraphs 83, 84, 85, 86, and 87. Read those paragraphs again. The *infinitive mood* has, in almost all respects, the powers of a noun. "*To work* is good for our health." Here it is the nominative of the sentence. "*To eat, to drink*, and *to sleep* are necessary." It cannot become a plural; but it may be, and frequently is, in the objective case; as, "I *want* to eat." The *to* is, in some few cases, omitted, when the infinitive is the objective case; as, "I *dare write*." But, "I dare *to write*," is just as neat, and more proper. The *to* is omitted by the use of the *ellipsis*: as, "I like *to* shoot, hunt, and fish." But care must be taken not to leave out the *to*, if you thereby make the meaning doubtful. Repetition is, sometimes, disagreeable, and tends to enfeeble language; but, it is always preferable to obscurity.

223. If you cast your eye once more on the conjugation of the verb *to work* in Letter VIII, you will see that I have there set down the three other Moods with all their persons, numbers, and tenses. The *Imperative Mood* I

dispatched very quietly by a single short paragraph; and, indeed, in treating of the other two Moods, the *Indicative* and the *Subjunctive*, there is nothing to do but to point out the trifling variations that our verbs undergo in order to make them suit their forms to the differences of Mood. The Indicative Mood is that manner of using the verb which is applied when we are speaking of an action without any other action being at all connected with it so as to make the one a condition or consequence of the other. "He *works* every day; he *rides* out"; and so on. But, there may be a condition or a consequence dependent on this working and riding: and, in that case, these verbs must be in the Subjunctive Mood; because the action they express depends on something else, going before, or coming after. "*If* he *work* every day, he *shall be paid* every day; *if* he *ride* out, he *will not be* at home by supper-time." The *s* is dropped at the end of the verbs here; and the true cause is this, that there is an auxiliary understood. If filled up, the sentence would stand thus: "If he should work; if he should ride out." So that, after all, the verb has in reality, no change of termination to denote what is called Mood.

224. Verbs in general, and, indeed, all the verbs, except the verb *to be*, have always the same form in the present tense of the indicative and in that of the subjunctive, in all the persons, save the second and third person singular. Thus we say, in the present of the indicative, *I work, we work, you work, they*

work; and in the subjunctive, the same. But, we say, in the former, *thou workest*; *he works*; while, in the subjunctive, we say, *thou work*, *he work*; that is to say, *thou mayest work*, or *mightest*, or *shouldest* (and so on) *work*; and *he may work*, or *might*, or *should*: as the sense may require. Therefore, as to all verbs, except the verb *to be*, it is only in these two persons that anything can happen to render any distinction of mood necessary. But, the verb *to be* has more of variation than any other verb. All other verbs have the same form in their indicative present tense as in their infinitive mood, with the trifling exception of the *st* and *s* added to the second and third person singular; as, *to have, to write, to work, to run*; *I have, I write, I work, I run.* But the verb *to be*, becomes in its present tense of the indicative, *I am, thou art, he is, we are, you are, they are*; which are great changes. Therefore, as the subjunctive, in all its persons, takes the infinitive of the verb without any change at all, the verb *to be* exhibits the use of this mood most clearly; for, instead of *I am, thou art, he is, we are*, the subjunctive requires, *I be, thou be, he be, we be*: that is to say, *I may be*, or *might be*; and so on. Look now at the conjugation of the verb *to be*, in Letter VIII, paragraph 102, and then come back to me.

225. You see, then, that this important verb, the verb *to be*, has a form, in some of its persons, appropriated to the *subjunctive mood.* This is a matter of consequence. Distinctions, without differences in the things distinguished,

are fanciful, and, at best, useless. Here is a real difference; a practical difference; a difference in the form of the word. Here is a *past tense* of the subjunctive; a past tense distinguished, in some of its persons, by a different manner of spelling, or writing, the word. *If I be*; *if I were*: and not *if I was, if he was*. In the case of other verbs, the past of the indicative is the same as the past of the subjunctive; that is to say, the verb is written with the same letters; but, in the case of the verb *to be*, it is otherwise. *If I worked, if I smote, if I had.* Here the verbs are the same as in, *I worked, I smote, I had;* but, in the case of the verb *to be* we must say, in the past of the indicative, *I was*, and in that of the subjunctive, *If I were.*

226. The question, then, is this: What are the cases, in which we ought to use the subjunctive form? Bishop Lowth, and on his authority, Mr. Lindley Murray, have said, that some conjunctions have a *government* of verbs, that is to say, make them or force them to be in the *subjunctive mood*. And then these gentlemen mention particularly the conjunctions, *if, though, unless*, and some others. But (and these gentlemen allow it) the verbs which follow these conjunctions are not always in the subjunctive mood; and, the using of that mood must depend, not upon the conjunction, but upon the sense of the whole sentence. How, then, can the conjunctions govern the verb? It is the sense, the meaning of the whole sentence, which must govern; and of this you will presently see clear proof. "*If it be* dark,

do not come home." "*If* eating *is* necessary to a man, he ought not to be a glutton." In the first of these sentences, the matter expressed by the verb may be or may not be. There exists an uncertainty on the subject. And, if the sentence were filled up, it would stand thus: "If it should be dark, do not come home." But, in the second sentence, there exists no such uncertainty. We know, and all the world knows, that eating is necessary to man. We could not fill up the sentence with *should*. And, therefore, we make use of *is*. Thus, then, the conjunction *if*, which, you see, is employed in both cases, has nothing at all to do with the government of the verb. It is the sense which governs.

227. There is a great necessity for care as to this matter; for, the meaning of what we write is very much affected, when we make use of the moods indiscriminately. Let us take an instance. "Though her honesty be right and becoming, it gives her no claim to praise; because she would be criminal, if she were not honest." Now, by employing the subjunctive in the first member of the sentence, we leave it uncertain whether it be right or not for her to be honest; and, by employing it, in the second, we express a doubt as to the fact of her honesty. We mean neither of these; and, therefore, notwithstanding here are a *though* and an *if*, both the verbs ought to be in the indicative. "Though her honesty is right and becoming, it gives her no claim to praise; because, she would be criminal, if she was not honest." Fill up with the auxiliaries. "Though her

honesty may be right; if she should not be honest:" and, then, you see, at once, what a difference there is in the meaning.

228. The subjunctive is necessarily always used when a sign or auxiliary is left out: as, "Take care, that *he come* to-morrow, that you *be ready* to receive him, that he *be* well received, and that *all things* be duly prepared for his entertainment." Fill up with the *signs*, and you will see the reason for what you write.

229. The verb *to be* is sometimes used thus: "*Were he* rich, I should not like him the better. *Were it* not dark, I would go." That is to say, *If he were*: *if it were*. "*It were* a jest indeed, to consider a set of seat-sellers and seat-buyers as a lawful legislative body." "*It were* to violate every principle of morality to consider honesty as a virtue, when not to be honest is a crime which the law punishes." The *it* stands for a great deal here. "Ridiculous, indeed, would the state of our minds be, if it were such as to exhibit a set of seat-sellers and seat-buyers as a lawful legislative body." I mention these instances because they appear unaccountable; and, I never like to slur things over. Those expressions, for the using of which we cannot give a reason, ought not to be used at all.

230. Thus, my dear James, have I gone through all that appeared to me of importance, relating to verbs. Every part of the letter ought to be carefully read, and its meaning ought to be well weighed in your mind; but, always recollect, that, in the using of verbs, that which requires your first and most earnest

care, is the ascertaining of the nominative of the sentence; for, out of every hundred grammatical errors, full fifty, I believe, are committed for want of due attention as to this matter.

LETTER XX.

SYNTAX, AS RELATING TO ADVERBS, PREPOSITIONS, AND CONJUNCTIONS.

231. After what has been said, my dear James, on the subject of the verb, there remains little to be added. The *Adverbs*, *Prepositions*, and *Conjunctions*, are all words, which never *vary their endings*. Their uses have been sufficiently illustrated in the letters on the Syntax of Nouns, Pronouns, and Verbs.

232. I omitted in the letter on verbs, to notice the use of the word *thing*: and I am not sorry that I did, because, by my noticing it in this concluding paragraph, the matter may make a deeper impression on your mind. *Thing* is, of course, a *noun*. A pen is a thing, and every animal, or creature, animate or inanimate, is a *thing*. We apply it to the representing of every creature in the universe, except to men, women, and children; and a *creature* is that which has been *created*, be it living, like a *horse*, or dead, like *dirt* or *stones*. The use of the word *thing* as far as this goes, is plainly reconcilable to reason; but, "To get drunk is a beastly *thing*." Here is neither human being, irrational animal, nor inanimate creature. Here is merely *an action*. Well, then, this action is the *thing*; for, as you have seen in Letter XIX, paragraph 222, a verb

in the infinitive mood, has, in almost all respects, the functions and powers of a *noun*. "It was a most atrocious *thing* to allow people to starve by withholding work from them when others are living in luxury." The meaning is, that the whole of these measures constitute a most *atrocious* deed or *thing*.

LETTER XXI.

ON PUTTING SENTENCES TOGETHER AND ON FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

MY DEAR JAMES,

233. I have now done with the subject of Grammar, which, as you know, teaches us to use words in a proper manner. But, though you now, I hope, understand how to avoid error in the forming of sentences, I think it right not to conclude my instructions without saying a few words upon the subject of adding sentence to sentence, and on the subject of *figurative language*.

Language is made use of for one of three purposes; namely, *to inform*, *to convince*, or *to persuade*. The first, requiring merely the talent of telling what we know, is a matter of little difficulty. The second demands reasoning. The third, besides reasoning, demands all the aid that we can obtain from the use of figures of speech, or, as they are sometimes called, figures of rhetoric, which last word means, the power of persuasion.

Whatever may be the purpose, for which we use language, it seldom can happen that we do not stand in need of more than one sentence; and, therefore, others must be added. There

is no precise rule ; there can be no precise rule, with regard to the manner of doing this. When we have said one thing, we must add another ; and so on, until we have said all that we have to say. But, we ought to take care, and great care, that, if any words in a sentence relate, in any way, to words that have gone before, we make these words correspond grammatically with those foregoing words ; an instance of the want of which care you have seen in Paragraph 146.

The *order of* the matter will be, in almost all cases, that of your thoughts. Sit down to write what you have thought, and not to think what you shall write. Use the first words that occur to you, and never attempt to alter a thought ; for, that which has come of itself into your mind is likely to pass into that of another more readily and with more effect than anything which you can by reflection invent.

Never stop to make choice of words. Put down your thoughts in words just as they come. Follow the order which your thoughts will point you ; and it will push you on to get it upon the paper as quickly and as clearly as possible.

Thoughts come much faster than we can put them upon paper. They produce one another ; and, this order of their coming is, in almost every case, the best possible order that they can have on paper ; yet, if you have several in your mind, rising above each other in point of force, the most forcible will naturally come the last upon paper.

Mr. Lindley Murray gives rules about long sentences and short sentences and about a due

mixture of long and short, and, he also gives rules about the letters that sentences should begin with and the syllables that they should end with. Such rules might be very well if we were to sing our writing; but, when the use of writing is to inform, to convince, or to persuade, what can it have to do with such rules?

There are certain connecting words, which it is of importance to use properly; such as *therefore*, which means for that cause, for that reason. We must take care, when we use such words, that there is occasion for using them. We must take care, that when we use *but*, or *for*, or any other connecting word, the sense of our sentences requires such word to be used; for, if such words be improperly used, they throw all into confusion. The adverbs *when*, *then*, *while*, *now*, *there*, and some others, are connecting words, and not used in their strictly literal sense. For example: "Well, then, I will not do it." *Then*, in its literal sense, means at that time, or in that time; as, "I was in America *then*." But, "Well, *then*," means, "Well, if *that be so*," or "*let that be so*," or "*in that case*." You have only to accustom yourself a little to reflect on the meaning of these words; for that will teach you never to employ them improperly.

A writing, or written discourse, is generally broken into paragraphs. When a new paragraph should begin, the nature of your thoughts must tell you. The propriety of it will be pointed out to you by the difference between the thoughts which are coming and those which

have gone before. It is impossible to frame rules for regulating such divisions. When a man divides his work into Parts, Books, Chapters, and Sections, he makes the divisions according to that which the matter has taken in his mind; and, when he comes to write, he has no other guide for the distribution of his matter into sentences and paragraphs.

Never write about any matter that you do not well understand. If you clearly understand all about your matter, you will never want thoughts, and thoughts instantly become words.

One of the greatest of all faults in writing and in speaking is this; the using of many words to say little. In order to guard yourself against this fault, inquire what is the substance, or amount, of what you have said. A very few examinations of this sort will so frighten you that you will be for ever after upon your guard against talking a great deal and saying little.

Figurative language is very fine when properly employed; but, figures of rhetoric are edge-tools, and two-edge tools too. Take care how you touch them! They are called *figures*, because they represent other things than the words in their literal meaning stand for. For instance: "The tyrants oppress and starve the people. The people would live amidst abundance, if these *cormorants* did not devour the fruit of their labour." I shall only observe to you upon this subject, that, if you use figures of rhetoric, you ought to take care that they do not make nonsense of what you say; nor excite the ridicule of those to whom you write.

I have now, my dear son, arrived at the last paragraph of my treatise, and I hope, that when you arrive at it, you will understand Grammar sufficiently to enable you to write without committing frequent and glaring errors. I shall now leave you, for about four months, to read and write English; to practise what you have now been taught. At the end of these four months, I shall have prepared a Grammar to teach you the French language, which language I hope to hear you speak, and to see you write, well, at the end of one year from this time. With English and French on your tongue and in your pen, you have a resource, not only greatly valuable in itself, but a resource that you can be deprived of by none of those changes and chances which deprive men of pecuniary possessions, and which, in some cases, make the purse-proud man of yesterday a crawling sycophant to-day. Health, without which life is not worth having, you will hardly fail to secure by early rising, exercise, sobriety, and abstemiousness as to food. Happiness, or misery, is in the mind. It is the mind that lives; and the length of life ought to be measured by the number and importance of our ideas; and not by the number and length of our days. Never, therefore, esteem men merely on account of their riches or their station. Respect goodness, find it where you may. Honour talent wherever you behold it unassociated with vice; but, honour it most when accompanied with exertion, and especially when exerted in the cause of truth and justice.

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